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ABSTRACT

The third in a series, this report provides a brief look at the recent history of the education reform movements in 10 states. The report begins with an essay by William Chance, former executive director of the Washington State Temporary Committee on Educational Policies, Structure and Management. In an article entitled "Changing the Terms of Discourse," Chance takes a look at how American school reform has transpired and concludes with some specific suggestions for the restructured school system. The second part of the report describes and analyzes the process of implementing education in 10 states: California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington. (SI)

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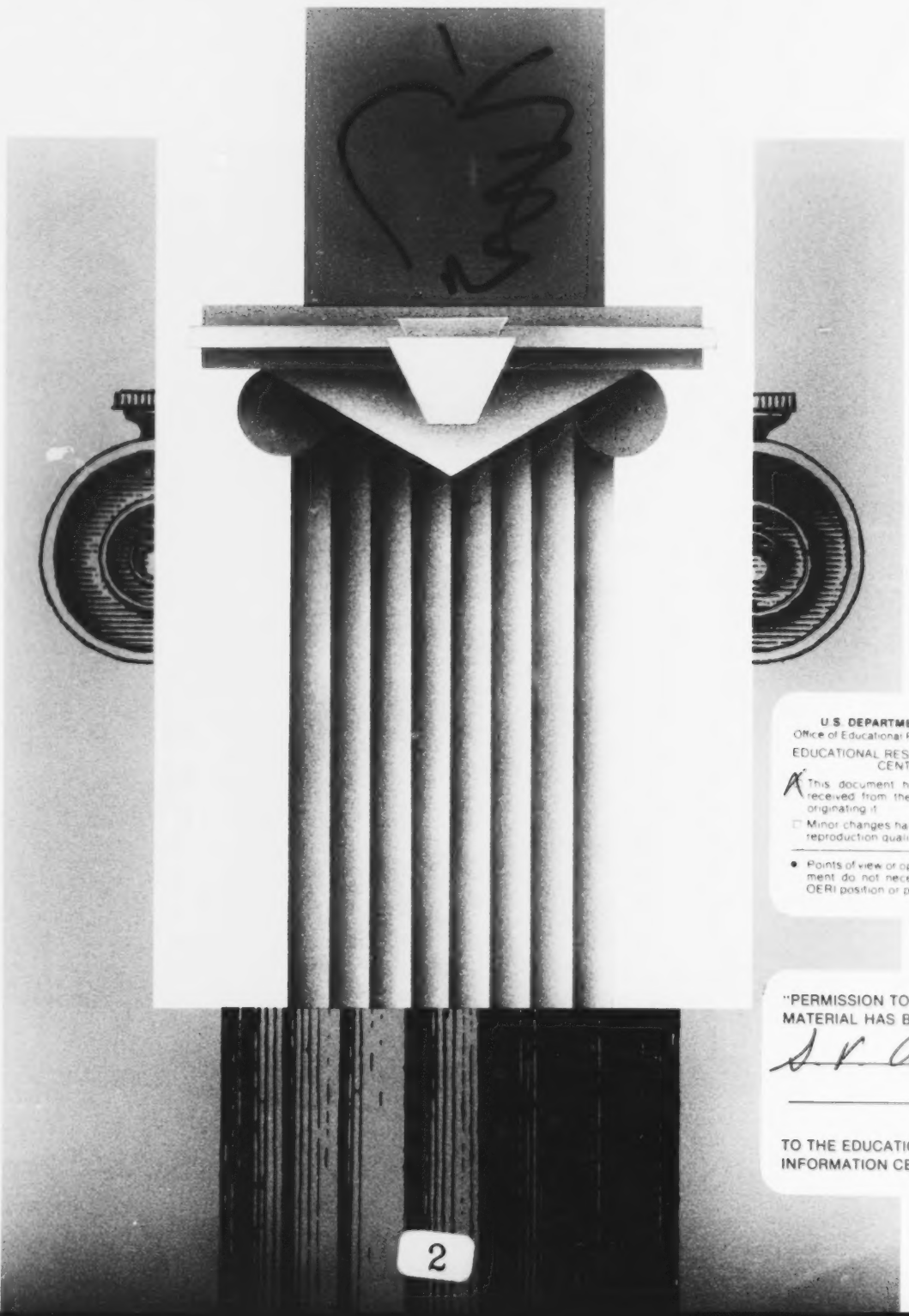

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SCHOOL REFORM IN 10 STATES

DECEMBER 1988

Education Commission of the States
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report, the third in a series supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, is to provide a brief look at the recent history of the education reform movement in 10 states. The selection of states grew out of the first publication in this series, "... *the best of educations,*" by William Chance, former executive director of the Washington State Temporary Committee on Educational Policies, Structure and Management.

Chance chose seven states — California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, South Carolina, Texas and Washington — for his description and analyses of the process of implementing education reform. This report uses the original states and adds Massachusetts, Minnesota and Tennessee.

Massachusetts was included because of its unique approach to building a reform package with local control and incentives in mind. This was one of the first states with an incentive program to encourage districts to restructure schools. Tennessee was selected because of its unique state-funded and state-operated career-ladder program for teachers, and Minnesota for its effort to give students more enrollment choices.

Tracking education reform activity was an easier task in the years immediately following the 1983 release of the hallmark *A Nation at Risk* report. In the initial reform states, one large reform law or package of laws usually was enacted. In each successive year, implementation rules and regulations, funding changes and delays, unforeseen costs and other problems have caused changes in the original reform objectives. For the most part, however, most of the reform programs have stayed in place.

But what were easily identified as discrete reform activities in 1983–84 have started to blend into the general business of education, making the tracking of reform activities more difficult. In some states, the reform mandates already are part of the education mainstream; in others, they are still identifiable, and in yet others, reform activity is still being initiated. It now seems appropriate to ask at what point states must quit looking at education reform as a discrete venture.

This report gives some historical perspective to the details of education reform in 10 states. It begins with an essay by William Chance, who takes a thoughtful look at how American school reform has, for has transpired. He argues that the so-called "first wave" of reform in the early 1980s carried with it numerous lessons for policy makers who may have been overly optimistic about how much improvement could take place in a short amount of time. The period also revealed the complexities of American education, he says complexities that now must be dealt with more fundamentally through different means — more collaboration, for example — and in different fashions — a new type of school, not simply an alteration to a traditional one.

Chance closes with some specific suggestions of what a restructured school system must include. He notes that change will take time, but predicts that demographic shifts and concerns about the preparation of the work force will keep the pressure on the education community until those changes are complete.

Chris Pipho, director of the ECS Information Clearinghouse, follows with his look at how education reform has transpired in the 10 states.

PREVIOUS REPORTS

Other publications in the ECS school reform series, sponsored by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation:

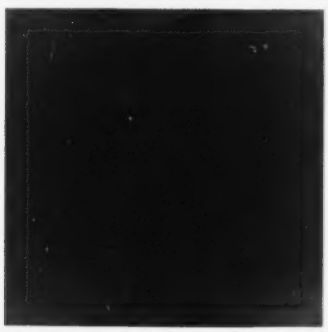
Chance, William. "... *the best of educations*." Chicago: John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 1986.

Education Commission of the States. *School Reform in Perspective*. Denver, Colorado: ECS, 1987.

CHANGING THE TERMS OF DISCOURSE

Restructuring Education in America

by William Chance



REFLECTIONS ON THE FIRST WAVE

The first cycle of the Great American School Reform Movement of the 1980s has passed. If the millennium has proved more elusive than expected, Chris Pipho's review of the experiences of 10 states makes it clear that substantial progress has occurred. Perhaps as important as these accomplishments, exposure to the complexities of public education has contributed to a new understanding of what ultimately must transpire. That assignment is fundamental restructuring, and that requires a change in the terms of discourse.

Late in 1985, shortly after "*the best of educations*" went to the printer, a school reform panel was convened at a national conference in the Southwest. The remarks of participants in the meeting were more elaborately garnished with criticisms than plaudits, as charges that the state programs were driven more by concerns for the economy than learning, the processes of change were more political than educational and the reform movements were more central than participatory recurred throughout the day. Speakers also insisted that the effects of the reforms were superficial as states followed each other down the same unexamined paths; almost everyone agreed that because of the deeply embedded character of the system, the prospects were not bright and the waves of reform probably would crash on the rocks of convention and custom.

Although not as extreme, some of this skepticism is apparent in the appraisal of the first wave of reforms in "... *the best of educations*," which opens with this observation:

> Following the heat of summer, it is difficult to measure the effects of a storm, and so it is with all of this. The reforms are seen both as significant and superficial. Skepticism over their relevance, precision and persistence underlies metaphorical references to Band-Aids, furniture rearrangements and additional coats of paint. A Washington-based analyst argues that "if the reforms do not affect who is teaching and what is going on in the classroom, they hardly can be considered reforms. One is hard-pressed to employ the term reform — improvement maybe, but to call it reform is to misuse the vocabulary."

A May 1988 *Newsweek* article carried this assessment:

> All 50 states have adopted some form of reforms, some starting before 1983. More than a dozen have completely overhauled their school systems. Roughly 40 states have raised high-school graduation requirements; in 19, students must pass a test to receive diplomas. Forty-six have mandated competency tests for new teachers; 23 have created alternative routes to certification. Teacher salaries have increased, on average, more than twice the rate of inflation, to $28,031 this year. Six states are now legally empowered to "take over" educationally deficient schools. ... Nationwide average combined SAT scores have recovered 16 points since 1980, reversing a 90-point decline from 1963.
>
> Other measures tell a more depressing story. The high-school dropout rate continues to hover around 30%. U.S. students still rank far below those in many other countries — particularly in math and science achievement — and books charting the appalling lack of knowledge by American youth have become fixtures on best-seller lists. Alarmingly, some experts conclude there has been little progress at the bottom of the educational heap.

Whatever else, the experiences and the changes of the first wave were positive and essential, but policy makers now understand that the business of school improvement will require more time and dedication than initially thought. In addition, a new appreciation of the importance of collaboration is forming, and this is contributing to recognition of both a broadened range of efficacy and responsibility for the schools and to new levels of sustained governmental, business- and citizen participation.

Equally important, the first wave revealed a great deal about the complexities of public education in the United States. Most of the changes earned an implicit endorsement of the existing system as the consummate norm. Expanded high-school graduation requirements, attendance rules, indicators of performance, teacher salary increases, all logically if quietly presume the continuation of the design of the conventional education structure. They fit within the existing matrix. In this sense they are modifications and adjustments to the prototype rather than alternatives. Frank Newman, ECS president, recently hit the nail on the head when he noted that the goal of the first wave of school reform essentially was "a good 1960s school."

The American educational system, the structure with which most people in this country are familiar, is a pragmatic product of a comparatively brief evolutionary process. Its form was determined by objective circumstances that were at least as much economic as educational. There is nothing new in the charge that contemporary reforms have been more economically than educationally motivated. Understanding of the "school problem" will be heightened by some appreciation of this.

THE FORMATION OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

The developmental process that led to the present way of doing things can be traced at least to the end of the last century and the advent of universal secondary schooling. The cardinal question facing 19th and early 20th Century visionaries was whether the new public high schools should stress a classic curriculum or programs more immediately relevant to the work place.

The debate transpired in the midst of general population increases and what must have seemed ceaseless streams of immigrants that were bringing to the schools native-born children from social classes not previously represented and unprecedented numbers of new arrivals who could not speak English. At this time the most powerful force in the country was industrialization — "the application of mechanical power to the production of goods" — and, along with that, a management penchant for the application of scientific principles to the production process; in a not especially unique manner, these things carried over to the newly forming education profession.

In effect, they ordained a role for public education of keeping children in school and out of the employment market both to control the supply and to ensure that students would be funneled in as adults with at least minimal manual skills. The operative emphasis in the schools for most children gradually shifted into coping strategies to keep them in school until they could be eased into the labor market. With manual skills, a sense of social purpose and a strong work ethic. Form follows function, and the structure of the system developed accordingly.

During this formative period, academic offerings for the college-bound came to represent a diminishing fraction of the whole, and differentiated tracks (vocational, general, fast and slow) formed and expanded through the curriculum. The system acquired a structure and organization in which children advance within annual cohorts. Seat time, the Carnegie Unit, is a surrogate for competence, and different capacities and interests are accommodated by different tracks and courses of differentiated difficulty.

In effect, the education process is a production grid, a management model, as learning is organized into discrete cells: types of schools — elementary, middle, secondary, junior college and college; *tracks* — academic, general, technical and vocational; time grids — five days a week, six to 10 periods a day; and subjects — communications, computation, reasoning, etc., separated into discrete disciplines, English, math, history and treated separately.

This matrix is the educational "structure." In a recent article in *Phi Delta Kappan*, Barbara Tye referred to certain aspects of it as "The Deep Structure of Schooling."

> Walk into a public high school in any of the 50 states, and you are likely to find yourself in familiar territory. You will not be surprised by the physical uniformity of classrooms; the overall control orientation of policy, programs and pedagogy; the general similarity of curriculum and schedule; the reliance on test scores as measures of success; and the practice of tracking.

Although educators and non-educators alike are becoming less tolerant of its limitations and more questioning of its claims, the structure persists. Perhaps it offered an effective response to the industrial needs of an earlier and simpler era, producing workers prepared to meet work schedules on the farm and in the mills, but now the industrial sector has changed, and an educational system designed for what have become obsolescent requirements is encountering difficulty fulfilling expressly different needs. If prevalent assumptions about the future are correct, existing conceptions of the form and nature of the educational

system are becoming as irrelevant as outmoded industrial plants. This is glaringly apparent as society struggles with only moderate success to meet calls for graduates possessing critical-thinking capabilities, adaptivity and literacy — people with intellectual skills who can read and write. These new demands shape the modern economic imperative — the one that now propels the reforms of the eighties.

ECONOMICS AND EDUCATION

The state reforms were influenced by economic considerations from the beginning, although the initial issues were obscured by uncertainty over the emergent images of the economic future. The character of the economic argument changed during the course of the first wave, from the early eighties when much of the attention was directed to programs to entice industries to relocate from one state or region to another. Governors viewed the quality of schools as vital factors in their industrial and economic development plans, and a close economic-education relationship was considered essential to building business sector support for the additional taxes normally required to accomplish educational change.

More recently, smoke-stack chasing and inducements to industrial relocations have become suspiciously similar to a zero-sum game, as national commerce increasingly confronts a worldly flow of goods and the trade balance tilts the wrong way. The clearest signal of a new atmosphere was the 1983 National Commission on Educational Excellence's report, *A Nation at Risk*, which unreservedly focused the national interest on the economic threat from abroad. With this report Americans began to appreciate the changing nature of the international economy and the importance of an effective educational program to the maintenance of any kind of national competitive edge. Few missives describe the hazards posed by an inadequate educational system more dramatically, and that report has achieved a level of national recognition rarely accomplished by governmental documents.

During the brief period encompassed by the first wave, the economic circumstances changed almost more strikingly than can be described. New modern communications transmute fresh terms depicting new concepts and trends into overcooked phrases almost before the significance of what they describe can be grasped: "global economy," "technological integration," "high-flex industries and work places," "Pacific Rim," "world trade" and others portray events that unfold as the years roll by. America's progression from mass production/mass consumption to high-flex systems directed to individualized tastes and styles, the growing presence of foreign trade and the incredibly portentous demographic changes facing the country are without prevenience.

In an almost ironical way, the rapid movement of these expressions into the lexicon dulls the importance they represent. Yet, any way it is stated, the American economy is undergoing fundamental change as this nation becomes a partner in fully integrated global economic and technological systems. Glenn Pascall, writing in a recent issue of the Seattle *Times*, offers this metaphor: "For the first three postwar decades, the world economy looked like a layer cake. The U.S. layer was on top, with frosting. Today the world economy is a marble cake. Productive resources anywhere belong to owners from everywhere. There is no way to neatly slice the most delectable piece from a marble cake."

New technologies and the importance of instantaneous communications along with increased productivity in manufacturing and agriculture are contributing to the prominence of the service sectors in the national economy. Goods-producing sectors accounted for 45% of the American working population in 1929. By 1977, the portion they composed had declined to 32%, and by 1986 the percentage had contracted to 25%. The service sector accounted for the remainder. Between 1958 and 1982, manufacturing declined from 30% to 21% of the GNP.

Additional dynamics with educational implications stem from modern managerial practices, especially the trend to increased delegation of responsibilities to production units. This is what Marc Tucker and David Mandel refer to in their paper, "Competitiveness and the Quality of the American Work Force," as "pushing decision making down to the front line of workers and giving the people in these units the freedom to decide how to get the job done and holding them accountable for results."

In *The Next American Frontier*, Robert Reich writes of future production lines that require precision engineering, are custom-tailored to buyers' specific needs and depend on rapidly changing technologies, all of which will be produced by "flexible systems." These are critically dependent on employees' skills and organizational teamwork.

The requirements of economic competitiveness cannot be fully grasped without reference to the convulsions transpiring in the composition of the population and which are certain to carry over to the work force during the remaining years of the present century.

It is hard to improve on Harold Hodgkinson's commentary in his report, *All One System*, especially the statement, "[W]hat is coming toward the educational system is a group of children who will be poorer, more ethnically and linguistically diverse, and who will have more handicaps that will affect their learning. Most important, by around the year 2000, America will be a nation in which one of every three of us will be non-white. And minorities will cover a broader socioeconomic range than ever before, making simplistic treatment of their needs even less useful."

The enormity of future requirements for qualified workers pushes the issue of the high school dropout to the status of a national scandal. America's need for educated and capable citizens is such that few states can ignore more than a quarter of their high school students and still face their economic futures with confidence. Similarly, no state any longer can write off inner-city schools as warehouses for street kids until they leave or pass through the system. In an unprecedented way all children are vital, even if monumental efforts are required to engage them.

Part of the uneasiness over an economic influence on the education system is associated with fears that the public schools will become subordinated to the demands of the work place; that is, in focusing on the economic dimension, the enormously more important relationship between an effective educational system and the civic culture — the crucial need for enlightened participants in the social and political systems — will be ignored. To minimize this connection is to enhance the possibility that the nation will achieve its economic goals and lose its social values.

The present messages are more reassuring. They emphasize core competencies, literacy — indeed, the higher literacies — for all students. Specific job skills are to be added only when the core competencies (which also are now viewed as essential job skills) have been acquired. Five years ago the National Academy of Sciences, in its report, "High Schools and the Changing Work Place," spoke of "command of the English language, reasoning and problem solving, reading, writing, computation, science and technology, oral communications, interpersonal relationships, social and economic studies and personal work habits and attitudes."

This listing represents a new synthesis that suits graduates well for work and for civic participation. If accomplished, it will ensure that each high school graduate will be prepared for the work place *and* for further education. This is as it should be. The ostensible dichotomy between academic and vocational preparation is diminishing, and it is becoming more difficult to identify a specific place in the school curriculum where job preparation should occur.

Many of these things were not well understood during the early years of the first wave. Now more is known both about the magnitude of the problem and strategies that will work. The kindergartners in school in 1988 will make up the first high school graduating class of the 21st Century. The implications for education are enormous, as the nation struggles to meet work-force requirements. This is at least part of the message the new economic imperative conveys.

For now it is sufficient to note that in both the past and present contexts the economic influence was strong. It was an economic force that supported curricula weighted toward social relevance and away from academic irrelevance during the first 70 years of the present century. It is a subsequent series of economic reactions centering on the quality of education, its relationship to a different kind of economic growth and development and to corresponding anxieties over the nation's international standing that stimulate and shape the reforms of the eighties and the call for a basic substantial education for all students. These different expressions of economic determinism parallel the nation's shift from an industrial to an information or service economy.

THE FORM AND EFFECTS OF THE FIRST WAVE

Most of the changes accomplished in the first wave were directed to improvements in student achievement, often in the form of strengthened graduation requirements, college admission standards, testing, competency statements, no-pass/no-play and attendance rules, etc., and to the education professions, as salary increases, strengthened certification requirements and, in some cases, differentiated salary systems. In a few states changes were directed to earlier childhood education, largely attributable to concerns over children at risk and the needs of working parents. Sometimes these were coupled with school latch-key programs where children were afforded opportunities to gain enriched educational and cultural experiences through their early learning years.

The emphasis was on mandated change. Essentially, the states accomplished by statute, executive order and budgetary effect about as much as they could through those devices. A great deal of commonality occurred as decision makers looked to other states for examples, choosing from among the various packages the elements that best fit their needs.

Observations that these efforts were political, uninformed and top-down, if overstated, probably are accurate, but they should not be considered pejorative. It is important to recognize that attention was necessarily directed to those things that were amenable to change via the political process. And in this respect, virtually all of the change processes acquired a political character as governors and other political leaders placed education at the top of their agendas, legislative assemblies rather than board meeting rooms

served as the arenas for debate and action, and statutes rather than department regulations became the media of change.

The pattern is changing, but it helps to remember that public education is a state responsibility met through funding programs that frequently compose the preponderance of the state budget; thus, a charge of politics should come as no surprise, though it does not follow that the resultant reforms were antithetical to educational improvement or that the education sector's influences were unfelt. Rather, in most of the states, educators, state superintendents and departments of education performed decisive roles.

In Illinois, for example, the state superintendent worked for the enabling legislation creating a blue-ribbon study committee and ensured that the department provided all needed information to the committee. In Colorado, the state superintendent obtained legislative support for a deliberate reform process. In South Carolina, the state school chief was an active participant with the governor and members of the legislature in the reform effort, and the work of that department was crucial to the success of the blue-ribbon committees there. In California, the effective coalition comprised a reform-minded state superintendent and educationally concerned legislators.

In fact, in all of the reform states, even though the initiative may have resided more in the political than educational realm, there was no instance in which anything less than a political/educational/public coalition operated. One mark of leadership is the capacity to surmount impediments through coalition building. This is especially so in education.

Governors took the lead in almost every state in spite of formidable obstacles. Separation of powers is the most vivid feature of the American political system, but it ventures close to the extreme in the states — "the laboratories of democracy," where not only are the three branches of government divided, but the executive and legislative powers are dispersed among myriad elected or selected officials — treasurers, attorneys general, school superintendents, auditors, etc.

Although the president of the United States is the unmistakable national executive with plenary executive power, the governors of all American states share executive authority with others whose names appear on the long ballot or whose appointments rest in the hands of an almost infinite variety of boards and commissions.

This fragmentation of power does not reduce civic expectations, especially with respect to the economic well-being of the populace. Education is the social sector most closely linked to economic vitality in the conventional wisdom. Yet, nowhere in government is the dispersal of authority more apparent than here. Even so, the reform processes resulted in the accomplishment of surprisingly sweeping programs, often paid for with funds from new taxes, the traditional cul-de-sac of major policy initiatives. In doing so they revealed something new about leadership.

Another charge is that because they were political, the reforms were uninformed. Considerable relativity is apparent here. There was not a strong presence of deep research behind many of the more popular changes, but there was more than most realize. There also was a continuous presence of knowledgeable people, such as John Goodlad, Mortimer Adler, Ted Sizer, Diane Ravitch and many others.

Policy makers normally knew what they were doing and where they were going. Many were former educators or administrators. Others took great pains to inform themselves on the issues. Legislative staffs tended to be well read and advised. National organizations ensured a steady flow of information as they made dissemination and advisory services an organizational priority. Many people served as consultants to legislative committees, and study panels and select committees were prominent in all of the states.

Perhaps more important is that the ideas reflected in the committee reports and the education packages overwhelmingly emanated from practitioners. In the words of one former select committee member:

> Virtually all of the people who offered testimony were educators or associated with education. All of the papers were prepared by the same kind of people. This is where the committee got all of its ideas.

A Texas school administrator related his experience with the study committee there:

> There is a perception that the ideas were Ross Perot's. I really think that most of them came from educators. The select committee went all over the state. It received input from all over. After it was finished, educators could not understand why people felt it was done over their opposition. Many looked upon it as anti-establishment, but the vast majority of the changes came from educators.

Obviously, the policy process is a two-way street — if educators need politicians, the reverse is equally so.

This brings up the final charge, that the changes were unduly "top-down," developed in a low-participation manner, in contrast to a "bottom-up" model, which implies change proceeding from the grass-roots to the policy stage through a high participation process. Both forms carry judgmental connotations: top-down is bad; bottom-up is good.

At a fairly narrow level of abstraction there were commonalities among all of the states. In South Carolina, the quintessential bottom-up state, the changes involved: (1) statewide select committees, (2) the active leadership of political figures and (3) omnibus legislation. This also was the pattern in Texas, usually labeled a top-down state. In fact, while the South Carolina process offers an excellent model for local participation in the policy process, wide participation was an aspect of most state programs, including Texas and other "top-down" states.

There is a lot of relativity here. Because virtually any state process, including the provision of appropriations to run the schools, is in some manner top-down, the label does little more than note the obvious. If South Carolina is a good example, and it is a very good one, prospects for success hinge less on the label than on the extent to which the process includes implementation linkages that join the state and the districts in a program of mutual accommodation.

WHITHER REFORM?

As one considers progress, the natural question is whether things are on the right track. The answer must be qualified, with the qualifications stemming from impressions that while the reforms are heading in the right direction, they must extend to more fundamental problems, those associated with the structure of schooling. They must get beyond the first arguments. Over the long run, fundamental restructuring, a changed matrix, is required. This means altering both the form and the process. It requires merging artificially separated curricular elements into a more logical whole. It extends to new conceptions of delegation, involvement and the empowerment of teachers. It raises questions about when children enter school and how they should progress through it. It changes the relationship between the system and the

state as authority is delegated downward to the districts and the schools. It challenges the present age 6–18 conception of schooling, inquiring into the possibility of one that begins and ends earlier. It calls for the elimination of tracking and a new emphasis on core competencies for all students. It offers choice, for parents, teachers and students. In more specific terms, fertile aspects of a restructured system include:

- The option of universal preschool for all students and the presence of parent-sponsored latchkey programs in all elementary and middle schools
- A true elementary-secondary system, with the elementary-school emphasis on the basic skills and early exposure to foreign languages and cultures for all students
- A secondary-sector emphasis on core competencies, perhaps exemplified by those proposed by the National Academy of Sciences in 1984: command of the English language, reasoning and problem solving, reading, writing, computation, science and technology, oral communication, interpersonal relationships, social and economic studies, and personal work habits and attitudes, with additional attention to higher literacies in the advanced years
- Treating the compulsory attendance age as a significant threshold by forestalling tracking through grade 10 and ensuring that all students master the core competencies by that point in their lives
- Moving away from reliance on credits to competency-based programs
- Substantial post-grade 10 options in academic, technical and vocational fields integrated with postsecondary programs in universities, community colleges, vocational centers or on the job training associated with direct entry into the work place
- An educational system characterized by choice, including opportunities for students who drop out to subsequently re-enter and complete
- Flexible, team-centered, adaptable and decentralized decision structures present at each school, with management autonomy delegated to people at the building level and substantive teacher involvement in academic planning
- A more fully integrated profession of teaching, with perquisites for public school teachers that are comparable to those for university faculty and professional interactions among teachers at all levels, school and college, as peers
- The full integration of technology into instruction, student records (computerized competency portfolios) and school management
- Movement of the concepts of lifelong learning and the Learning Society from rhetoric to reality

There are other aspects, but these are the more apparent. Clearly, the system must be changed. School improvement has extended to the present system's confines; there is no room for additional high school graduation requirements or time for more tests. Attention must turn to changing the system.

Similarly, the process of change must shift from mandated packages of reforms to more collaborative, cooperative, protracted endeavors. New systems cannot form overnight. With changes of this magnitude, the laws of situation obtain, and a sustained effort, what Dick Elmore and Milbray McLaughlin perfectly term, "steady work," becomes the appropriate mode. Pilot programs, experimentation, trial and error and sharing of experiences are the appropriate levers.

In a promising way, some of this is occurring, as new ideas are tested in programs such as Washington State's "Schools for the 21st Century" project, which extends flexibility from state statutes and regulations for experimentation with new approaches, along with funding for additional staff planning days to design, conduct, evaluate and report on the programs. Governor Booth Gardner is recommending that this program be doubled.

At the national level, a similar focus on restructuring from within exists in projects such as ECS's "Re:Learning" effort, a joint endeavor with Ted Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools, presently involving Arkansas, Delaware, Illinois, New Mexico and Rhode Island. The goal is a completely redesigned educational system, from the school building to the state department of education. The program involves educational professionals at all levels and is directed to the redesign of teaching and learning in the schools.

There are other examples of new and different initiatives. Choice in public education is a case in point. *Education Week* calls it "an idea based on two pillars of the American system — equal opportunity and open-market competition" and notes that Manhattan's East Harlem program is attracting students from all over the city, Sarasota County Florida's elementary school of choice (which emphasizes discipline and basic skills) has a waiting list of more than 1,000, and parents in Cambridge, Massachusetts, are required to select their children's schools. The dedicated and premier spokesman for the program in Minnesota, Governor Rudy Perpich, reports that his state's program has raised the level of community support for and involvement in the schools.

The country also has gained new awareness of what works for at-risk students. More is known about the importance of early intervention (in the form of attention to child care, early childhood education and parent training), interagency collaboration (school and relevant social agency cooperation), school restructuring (innovative curricula and pedagogical approaches), parent involvement, mentoring and other techniques for keeping children engaged and in school.

Attention to the higher literacies is in some respects at the opposite extreme, but work in this important field is proceeding under an ECS project funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

The variety and range of innovative experimentation apparent in such efforts contrasts with the conventionality that characterized much of the first wave. It also reflects a new awareness that each school is different, and the task of restructuring should celebrate rather than suppress the differences.

There is other good news. American education is often likened to a pendulum, perpetually engaged in a series of swings between practical and academic extremes. The reform movement is viewed as a restoration, a "return to basics," carrying with it an implicit feeling of "here we go again" and a presumption that the stress on academics will be displaced by other imperatives, probably during the next decade.

Both the pendulum metaphor and the assumptions that call it forth are imprecise. Throughout its modern existence, the practice of American education has fallen short of its more idealistic purposes. While providing *schooling* to the many, *education* has been limited to the few. In the name of egalitarianism the system has fostered elitism.

One of the important virtues of the present reform movement, and one of its engaging simplicities, is that states are mandating the coterminous presence of excellence and equity by insisting on standards that must be met by all students. Explicitly or implicitly, they lead from a presumption that all children can learn. In doing so, they move the system to the goal of universal education for the first time ever.

In some respects, whether the driving force is social or economic is irrelevant. Educated people are essential to the future of this democracy, but the case can be argued equally well on civic and commercial grounds: the educational needs of both are increasingly the same. Perhaps more important, as people respond to these requirements they also may discover that they have closed the gap between education and training — between education for college and education for work — and eliminated the ostensible dichotomy between excellence and equity.

With respect to the future, Americans must become more honest with themselves about the nature of their educational problems and more confident of their ability to solve them. Among other things, this involves reconsideration of the ascription of public education's malaise to virtually anything that exists outside the capacities of the school — whether social or economic conditions, reduction of local control, insufficient funding, parental disinterest or mounting paperwork.

These things are important, but they are not sufficient. It is difficult to attribute all of the problems of education to broken families, a shrinking middle class or the nation's threatened stature in international affairs. Indeed, such arguments render the issue unapproachable, as in their presence one cannot know where the schools are or what they can propose as solutions.

The case must be argued in a more balanced context, one that addresses education's environmental conditions and the efficacy of the system's curricular and programmatic responses to them. Unless this is done, most that is prescribed will prove vapid.

Both the political and the economic worlds are sending compelling messages to the educational sector. Those messages will persist until a sufficiently educated population and work force is achieved.

Improvement will require time, and while the circumstances dictating change are urgent, some time is available. As long as this nation lags in the international economic sphere, attention will ineluctably return to the educational realm. For better or worse, educational improvement and America's future have been linked in the national consciousness. When that happened, education entered into an embrace with an 800-pound gorilla. The embrace will last until the gorilla gets tired.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The impressions presented here formed over several years, perhaps beginning in 1982 with acceptance of the post of executive director of the newly established Washington State Committee on Educational Policies, Structures and Management, a blue-ribbon committee directed to review all aspects of Washington's public education system.

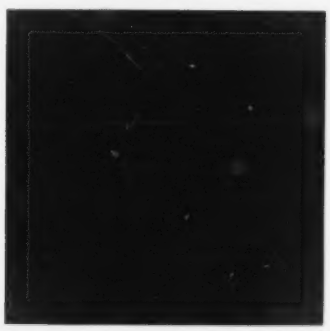
Subsequent work with the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the report on the experiences of people in seven states represented by "*. . . the best of educations*" led to their further development, as did the activities during the succeeding year with the foundation and ECS when the findings of that report were disseminated.

A year with the Western Governors' Association and preparation of a report on economic competitiveness and occupational education in the western states and activities with the Washington Roundtable, the Washington State Economic Development Board and the Institute of Public Policy and Management at the University of Washington led to further understanding.

The object here is not so much to list these things as to acknowledge the support of these organizations and note that some of these ideas have appeared at different stages, degrees and times in materials prepared under their auspices.

STATE PROFILES

by Chris Pipho



CALIFORNIA

1983

In the summer of 1983, the California legislature enacted and the governor signed SB 813, ch. 498, a major reform law that made more than 80 changes in the education code designed to improve K–12 education. The package included a merit pay (mentor) program, incentives to lengthen the school day and year, higher starting salaries for teachers, consolidation of regular and special transportation programs, mini-grants for teachers to improve classroom instruction and a pilot program to reward high schools for improved student achievement.

While the reform law was enacted and signed, Governor George Deukmejian line-item vetoed $2 billion in second-year funding, leaving a question about what could be carried out in the 1984–85 school year.

1984

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Bill Honig and the state board of education augmented education reform by adopting an accountability program. A portion of the plan called for increased enrollments in selected academic courses, improved statewide test scores, reduced dropout rates and increased attendance rates, along with increased performance for college-bound students on entry tests and in advanced-placement courses. Statewide targets for these indicators were established for each year through 1990, and the plan ranked schools with students of similar socioeconomic backgrounds on 42 different categories. School districts received their first annual performance report in the spring of 1985.

Also in 1984, Stanford University and the University of California at Berkeley started the Policy Analysis for California Education Project (PACE). One goal of this organization was to provide policy makers with a "nonpartisan, objective independent body" of information on K–12 education. One of the first reports was "The Condition of Education in California," published since 1985, which documented some of the impact of the reform movement.

The 1984 legislative session concentrated on preserving a $950 million budget reserve with Deukmejian vetoing 306 budget items. A reduction in class size for elementary students and a high school community service program were among items cut. A study of the feasibility of offering a foreign language program in high school, a survey of school district parenting programs and an expansion of the 12th-grade basic-skills examination were enacted.

1985

The legislature increased state support by 9.4% over 1984 and included full funding for the 1983 education reform law provisions, including the incentives for a longer school day and year. Funding for before- and after-school child care was cut by the governor. New laws identified the values to be reflected in adopted elementary school textbooks and added a required one-semester course in economics to the high school graduation requirements by 1988.

In addition, another PACE study of 20 high schools' responsiveness to SB 813 showed that between 1982 and 1985, advanced-placement course offerings increased 34%, science classes were up 22% and math enrollment increased 19%. Home economics offerings decreased 21%, industrial arts offerings were down 16%, while English, social studies, music and art offerings remained relatively stable.

The California Educational Improvement Incentive Program, included in SB 813, allowed high schools to earn bonuses of up to $400 per student. At least 93% of the seniors had to take the California Assessment Program test, and the average scores had to be higher than the previous year. Test participation rose from 79% of the seniors in 1984 to 91% in 1985. Of 1,213 eligible schools, 548 shared in the incentive money. In 1986, funding for this program was deleted from the budget.

1986

Funding for reform implementation was one of the big issues facing the state in 1986. PACE estimated that an enrollment growth of 100,000 students per year would necessitate a 46% budget increase by 1991. In addition, approximately $1 billion would be needed for teacher salary increases and other reforms, it said.

The state spending cap established by the Gann initiative of 1979, however, restricted state spending to a complex formula based on population growth and inflation. Although the cap had never been reached because of a declining student population and low inflation rate, it was anticipated that the complex set of factors would be reached in 1987. Because this Gann limit would probably restrict the education budget severely, the emphasis, according to PACE, would be on continuing existing programs and serving the increased number of students. Education reform was expected to suffer cutbacks or inadequate funding.

Late in 1986, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing adopted new regulations and standards requiring colleges and universities to provide clear evidence of the competency of prospective teachers in training programs. The rules also required classroom teachers who supervised student teachers to have training in supervision and to give practice instruction to the teacher trainees in a "cross-cultural" classroom.

1987

The year opened with Deukmejian proposing one of the smallest education budget increases in three years. Spending under this proposal would move from $15.3 billion to $16 billion, an increase of 4%. Honig immediately attacked the proposal as inadequate, saying it would force the schools to make a 4% real cut. He explained that 2% of the increase would go to serve the 100,000 new students. Because 1% would come from lottery funds, the state was really giving only a 1% increase when 5% was needed just to stay even, he said. The debate over education funding continued throughout the legislative session with Honig enlisting school officials to help explain the budget needs. Funding for teacher grants was also deleted in 1987.

1988

Deukmejian indicated in his 1988 message to the state legislature that a truce had been made with the commissioner of education. This handshake ended the open differences between the two that had influenced the public's attitude about the state education system. The governor's budget proposals did little to further the state reform activities, and Deukmejian decided not to propose additional programs until his Commission on Education Quality issued a final report.

For the districts, however, the financial pinch was not on hold, and they struggled to make ends meet and to meet legal requirements to provide unfunded programs. An amendment to ease the Gann limitations was defeated in June. Clearly, more and more pressure was being placed on the local schools to be not only academically but also fiscally accountable. In the summer, the governor-appointed commission issued its recommendations. It supported Deukmejian's contention that revising the school funding system was not the best solution to the needed educational reforms in the state. More power and responsibility should be borne by local districts and parents, the panel said.

Reforms that have taken place divert the emphasis from the issue of modifying the finance structure — improved textbooks with more pressure placed on the textbook publishers to provide quality products, improved test scores of minority students and more students opting for advanced coursework. The 1988–89 academic year opened with funds stretched to the limit, continuing enrollment increases and the reality that the projected ethnic groups majority in the schools had already arrived.

COLORADO

Education reform in Colorado took shape through state board study and debate with an eye to local school district needs. The Accountability Act of 1971 and a subsequent legislative confirmation in 1980 set the stage for the state board and commissioner of education to be involved in reform through local school district accountability committees and boards of education. The state's constitutional prohibition against curriculum and textbook adoption is considered by some a relic of another era. In spirit, however, Colorado has always been a strong "local control" state, and this became even more evident as the reform era unfolded.

1983

In the spring of 1983, Governor Richard Lamm released a major report on quality in the schools. It included recommendations for a lengthened school day and year; more involvement from the business community; strengthened high school graduation and college admission requirements; a statewide student testing program; changes in teacher tenure, merit pay, forgivable loans and bonus pay in shortage areas (primarily math and science); and merit pay for administrators.

He asked citizens to respond to the report and the results were generally positive and supportive. Subsequently, Lamm appointed a 32-member Task Force for Excellence in Education. He charged the group to review the recent national reform reports, the status of Colorado education and its relation to the state's economic growth, high school graduation and college admission requirements, and the shortage of math and science teachers. Resulting recommendations were to be presented to the legislature in 1984. Briefly, the task force found "pockets of excellence" in the existing system and areas to be addressed. It also found the state public education system was not in dire need of major repair.

Also in the spring of 1983, the state board and state department of education began to consider the issues and proceeded to identify needed changes in the education system through a process called "Operation Renaissance." The project initiated six separate task forces composed of the state's education policy makers, business leaders and representatives of the community. Each task force was charged with making recommendations to the state board by the end of 1983 on one of six areas: foreign languages, science, social studies, the education professions, school time and the family/school relationship. The board also gave its support to the task forces appointed earlier to address the issues of English, mathematics, college expectations and remedial education.

In addition, the legislature's Subcommittee on Finance began investigating the school finance system to determine how school financing could promote excellence. It was expected to rewrite the school finance laws. Legislation enacted increased the state sales tax by half a percent for a 10-month period beginning in May 1983 for education and other state programs; limited the amount the state review board could add to district budgets prior to or in addition to what individual districts could raise through local tax levies; established the Colorado Advanced Technology (CAT) institute to promote education and research high technology; improved teacher education and ensured computer curricula matched industry's needs; and limited state and local board authority over private schools with the exception of a 172-day requirement for basic academic instruction per year. The CAT institute provisions were not funded.

1984

By the spring of 1984, the Operation Renaissance groups had reported their recommendations, and the state education department was holding forums across the state in an effort to disseminate the information to local school districts. A key feature was a local self-assessment of education quality.

Although the original schedule called for the 1984 legislative session to have the report of the governor's task force, the final report was not released until May 1984, too late for adequate review, debate or action in that legislative session. A major recommendation was to stabilize local property taxes. This would be done by increasing the state share in the school finance act and maintaining an annual increase in the districts' authorized revenue base equal to 7% of the statewide average base in the previous year. Other recommendations were to provide adequate state funding to monitor district performance, to equalize funding of construction needs, to fund the language proficiency act fully and reward schools for superior performance.

By the fall of 1984, the majority of the local district self-assessment efforts had progressed far enough for the education reform movement to be setting itself into motion. The state's bleak economic picture and the legislature's failure to approve increased taxes presented new problems, however. Late in the 1983 session, the 10-month temporary half-percentage increase in the sales tax had been extended until June 1984, yet this did not represent an adequate solution. The monetary backing needed to achieve the goals simply was not available.

The state board of education also had appointed four new task forces to address the areas of special education, occupations and the world of work, gifted and talented programs and school finance. These groups issued their respective recommendations in the fall.

Although the legislature had not tackled the school finance dilemma during the year (or passed a proposed bill to earmark state sales tax revenues for education), the 1984 legislative session did increase equalization funding and establish such a fund for property-poor districts. It also modified the per-pupil formula to lessen the effect of enrollment declines on districts and passed a measure permitting districts to go directly to the voters or appeal to the board of education for extra tax increases. A study of school finance was requested.

In the meantime, the postsecondary education scene was facing considerable scrutiny by the governor, the legislature and postsecondary governing bodies. Lamm announced that 1985 was to be the "Year of Education" in Colorado and called for efforts to make major reforms in the "overcrowding and inefficiency" of the state's higher education system. A spring report by the state budget office suggested the state consider closing some of the smaller colleges. The Joint Budget Committee spent a considerable amount of time debating the finance and governance of the system and finally decided to call for the establishment of a blue-ribbon commission to study the system's problems.

1985

In January, Lamm's education message to the legislature left no doubt of his intention that 1985 be the "Year of Education." Much of this message was taken from the 1984 Task Force on Excellence in Education

report. But there were some other requests as well. Specifically, the governor requested legislative approval of a pilot career-ladder program, administrator training in evaluation of teachers, a program to ease the teacher shortage through temporary certificates, a loan forgiveness program for superior education students willing to teach in the state for a certain period of time, the development of a "teacher corps" to attract quality teachers into a program to address the problems of special-needs students, increased parental and business/industry involvement in education, higher education standards emphasizing the basic skill areas while stressing math/science, a better use of school time to increase instruction and the time teachers spend with students, and innovative computer usage.

The governor's agenda also included a program to address the dropout and at-risk student problems by providing a stimulus for both the at-risk student still in school and individuals who had dropped out. The program was to provide them with a "second chance" for receiving an adequate education. State funding would go to the parents of such students who could cash in the voucher at the school of their choice — public, private, vocational, in-district or outside of the district boundaries. Lamm's comment to the education world was that if non-public educational ventures could train these students, they should be afforded the opportunity to do so.

The primary legislative contribution was HB 1383, "The Educational Quality Act of 1985." It encompassed the governor's voucher plan for student choice, certificated personnel evaluator training, recognition of excellence in teachers and administrators, revamping of the administrator preparation programs, additional program offerings for high-achieving students, required administration of standardized student assessment and quality teacher recruitment. Also included was a model alternative salary and career-ladder plan.

Key to the implementation of this law was some creative finance planning. The state board of education and Commissioner of Education Calvin Frazier opted for testing the public's willingness for additional financial commitment to the education system by asking the local districts to return to the state education funds appropriated to them. These funds would be used to address the provisions of the act. The "2 + 2 Project" was the result of this gamble. To implement the new laws fully required a commitment of $2 million per year for the next two years. The districts agreed to return $3.70 per student for each of the two years. Coupled with its own commitment for funding, the state reached the $2 million needed.

Activities under the act were to be developed collaboratively between state and local education officials, higher education, business/industry, parents and other groups concerned with the state education programs. Much of the first year was spent collecting the necessary descriptive data, including results of student testing, in order to evaluate the quality of education in the state. The second year was devoted to field-testing the variety of reform approaches.

Other major legislative action occurred in postsecondary education where the Colorado Commission on Higher Education was restructured into a more powerful agency.

As early as September 1985, the first report to the education community and the public was released on the efforts being undertaken in the "2 + 2 Project." A supportive partnership involving the state PTA, teachers' union, vocational education community, deans of the education schools and the state business/industry organization was announced. Major objectives had been arranged into six program areas: student testing, professional assessment and development, dropout prevention, service to gifted and talented students, teacher recruitment and recognition, and the "second-chance" voucher plan.

Each program had an advisory committee and a technical assistance group which included representatives of all levels of education from all geographic regions of the state. Goals were set and projected activities, timelines and objectives mapped out. Desired outcomes were established which could provide local districts with examples of exemplary practices and approaches they could replicate. This grassroots approach to education reform was also to be an interesting test of a bottom-up education reform plan.

1986

Lamm's budget message requested a total of $877 million for education, which included the planned $2 million for continuing the "2 + 2 Project," $23.8 million for postsecondary education and an additional $4.3 million for incentive grants to reward excellence in higher education systems. The "2 + 2 Project" reported on 30 local district pilot programs across six program areas. The Commission on Higher Education became involved with the "2 + 2 Project" by studying teacher training programs. Before the end of the school year, a statewide student assessment was made in grades 3, 6, 9 and 11, and the results were released through district summaries in the summer.

The legislative session ended with a 3.3% increase in funding and the "2 + 2" program intact. Lawmakers also mandated a model data collection system on dropouts in grades 7–12.

Late in 1986, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education reinforced the stress on student achievement levels by adopting minimum admission standards for the state's four-year public colleges and universities. The standards reflected the panel's view of a four-tier state postsecondary system by indicating that the top 22% of state high school graduates would qualify for admission to the "highly selective" state colleges; the top 40% would qualify for the second or "selective" tier; the top 65% for the third, "moderately selective" tier; and all would qualify for open admissions categories.

1987

Newly elected Governor Roy Romer sounded a familiar message . . . "revise the school finance system to assure equitable financing across the districts and raise the minimum salary for teachers." Specific requests were made in the governor's budget for $64,000 to continue the dropout-prevention program, $300,000 to establish student-assessment programs and $382,000 for installing telecommunication systems in the rural schools.

By the end of the legislative session, there was little consensus for changing the school finance formula. The legislature approved the smallest appropriation increase for schools since 1973 with most of the new money earmarked for property-tax relief.

In September, the Colorado Department of Education released the final "2 + 2 Project" report. This effort had involved 120 separate projects and reinforced the concept of challenging local districts out of mediocrity by supporting creative approaches. The resulting recommendations included:

- A five-year student assessment plan required of each district which continued periodic testing of student abilities in basic skill areas and initiated tests in critical thinking and writing
- Strengthened requirements for certification of teachers, including basic-skill, writing-ability and subject-matter testing and a more systematic judgment of the individual's ability

- Increased involvement by local school staff members in teacher preparation programs.
- Established standards for administrators, including instructional strategies and competency-based internship programs.
- Continuation for at least two more years of the administrator training programs as well as establishment of regional development centers to ensure continual training and recertification programs for administrators.
- Early intervention programs for at-risk 3- and 4-year-olds.
- Required gifted and talented programs in each district.
- Required district recognition of teacher as well as school excellence.

Through the slow process of the "2 + 2 Project," the education community had been able to pinpoint concepts in the proposed reforms that did not go far enough and others that would not be practical for implementation in the state's decentralized system. They determined that attempts to initiate teacher career-ladder plans on a district-by-district basis were too slow and generally unsuccessful. Mentoring, interacademic partnerships of districts and postsecondary programs and other incentive programs which could be expanded were suggested as alternatives. The dropout rates declined for districts that had participated in the special programs. Educators also found that assessment of students, teachers and administrators affirmed the state's ability to stand well in national comparisons.

Frazier stressed the need to revise the school finance plan, the importance of preschool programs for academic success, better training of school board members, recognition of the importance of acknowledging and rewarding excellence, and the importance of unity among educators in reaching the goal of an excellent state education system.

1988

Attention was riveted in 1988 to legislative handling of two major issues — reform of the school finance system and expansion of the 1985 parental choice measure to cover all students. Although the legislature did pass a school finance reform measure, it was, at best, a continuation of past formulas and not a major overhaul. The measure indicated the legislature's intent to move away from property-tax reliance and to include pilot programs for at-risk preschool education, for student testing, for recognition of excellent schools, and for alternative teacher salary policies which may lead to career ladders and mentor programs. Also getting a nod from the legislature was a bill to create alternative routes for teacher certification. Opening the district's doors through parental choice didn't survive, but teacher certification policies were strengthened. Both school finance and expansion of enrollment options will probably resurface in the 1989 legislative session.

The final appropriation for education included a 6% increase. However, this was tempered by several provisions. One eliminated the state board's ability to grant district revenue increases over the amount authorized. The other ended special funding for schools with small enrollments.

FLORIDA

1983–84

Education reform seemed to be on the "fast track" in Florida in 1983. One of the first states to enact a mega-reform package, Florida had three reform laws signed by Governor Robert Graham by July. The process wasn't easy, however. Graham had to push the reform package through one extended session and three special sessions before enactment.

The process really started earlier with a study commission appointed by the governor in 1982 and the enactment of an accountability and testing package in the mid-1970s. Claims that the *A Nation at Risk* report triggered much of the reform activity in Florida is unfounded. In some ways, *A Nation at Risk* followed some of the activities that had been under way in Florida since the mid-1970s.

In 1983, Graham was known as an education governor, who took many risks in order to get the reform package passed. In general, the 1983 reforms were primarily student and school centered, while the merit-pay and merit-schools programs followed in the 1984 legislation. In part, the bills enacted in these two years contained the following provisions.

- **Curriculum reform.** A curriculum framework provided quality control of middle and high school courses by making content and intended outcomes of similar courses uniform statewide. Writing skills were enhanced by requiring one essay per week of students in grades 10–12. Foreign language instruction was to be provided in elementary school. In grades 6–8, the framework required students to take three years of mathematics, communications, science and social studies, and to be regularly exposed to art, music, foreign language and health.
- **Graduation requirements.** High school graduation requirements were increased to 22 academic credits, with three credits required in both mathematics and science. In 1986–87, the requirements were increased to 24, with four credits required in English, three in mathematics and science, and one each in American and world history, economics, American government, fine arts, vocational education, composition and literature.
- **College admissions.** Effective in 1987, two credits of a foreign language were required for admission to a state university, and college-bound students had to meet new graduation requirements.
- **Student testing.** Development of a statewide testing program, Standards of Excellence, was approved to test high-achieving students. Students were required to pass a statewide test of basic mathematics and communication skills, plus an exit test of applied basic skills, to earn a high school diploma.
- **Textbooks/instructional materials.** The legislation called for textbooks and instructional materials to be made consistent with course objectives and performance standards. No textbooks below grade level were to be selected. The state was required to train councils to select textbooks, and publishers were required to describe how textbooks would meet course objectives. The new laws also specified that teacher comments on textbooks would be submitted to the commissioner of education and gave school principals responsibility for assuring that textbooks were used at grade level.
- **School discipline.** All students were to receive a copy of the code of student conduct at the beginning of each school year. Schools were required to report to parents yearly on discipline, truancy, attendance and corporal punishment. The state also provided $1 million for a dropout prevention program.

• **Performance standards.** Each school district in Florida was required to develop performance standards for grade 9–12 academic programs in which credit toward high school graduation was awarded. Policies for student mastery of performance standards were to be established for credit courses.

• **Academic enrichment.** Legislation authorized the commissioner of education to promote out-of-school learning activities sponsored by schools and community organizations, with special emphasis on mathematics and science and their applications. The state also funded programs for summer camps in science, mathematics and computers for K–12 students.

• **Academic recognition.** Through the Florida Academic Scholars Program, the commissioner of education was to reward outstanding performance of public and non-public high school students. Awards were to go to all students who met the following requirements: four years of progressively advanced instruction in language arts, science and mathematics; three years of instruction in social studies; two years in a foreign language; and one year in either art or music and physical education. Students following such a program would be guaranteed admission to a state university and scholarships to attend Florida institutions of higher learning.

• **School day and year.** The total hours of instruction in the school year were increased from 900 to 1,050 hours, with an additional requirement of seven daily periods of instruction for students in grades 9–12 or scheduling that would permit each student to earn seven credits. The state appropriated $67 million, plus an additional $3 million for textbooks, to high schools providing an extended school day.

• **Extracurricular activities.** Students were required to maintain a 1.5 average, on a 4.0 scale, to participate in interscholastic extracurricular activities.

• **Performance-based pay.** The state appropriated $10 million for 1984–85 for a statewide merit-pay/master-teachers plan ($3,000 a year per teacher). Teachers and other staff in successful schools were to be rewarded. Principals' salaries were also to be based on competence and performance.

• **Teacher shortages.** The law also provided for inservice teacher training, certification of adjunct instructors, student loans, loan forgiveness and scholarship programs to encourage people with Ph.Ds to teach in high schools and incentives to teach in low-income schools. About $9.2 million was provided for summer institutes for science and mathematics teachers. The law also asked the state to develop an experimental certification program to allow arts and sciences graduates to teach in high school.

• **Principal training.** By 1986, principals and assistant principals were to be selected on the basis of a written examination of performance capability and required to serve a one-year internship.

1985

One of the more controversial aspects of the reform movement was the merit-pay program for teachers. The evaluation of teachers, in order to place them on various merit pay steps, led to considerable teacher dissatisfaction. By February 1985, both state teacher unions had filed court suits to block implementation of the program. They argued in court that the program was unfair and violated collective bargaining laws. They also called the program a glorified bonus plan and said that it was not a true career-ladder plan.

Another union concern was the amount of money appropriated to implement the plan. In the first year, only 6,000 teachers were able to get the bonus, although more than 30,000 applied and apparently met

the requirements. Several bills were introduced in the 1985 legislative session to repeal the merit-pay plan but none was approved.

There was also legislative concern over the increased graduation requirements, but for the most part these provisions stayed in place. The legislature, however, agreed to delay the incentive program to lengthen the school day with an add-on seventh period for mathematics and science offerings and other courses. In some local school districts, the seven-period day had already been part of the budget. Because the incentive money was earmarked for a seventh period, it created some controversy over which districts were eligible for the funds.

1986

The merit-pay controversy continued as the 1986 legislative session opened. Graham proposed some modification to the program while others attempted to increase funding. But in the final days of the session, the legislature voted to replace the merit-pay program with a career-ladder program. Local school districts had until the 1987–88 school year to work with teachers' unions to devise a career-ladder plan and guidelines.

Most people pointed to inadequate funding as the reason for the death of the merit-pay plan. The new career-ladder plan required the legislature to allocate at least $90 million for the program by July 1, 1988, or the program would automatically be abolished.

The legislature also enacted a certification law that required teachers, beginning in 1988, to pass a subject-matter exam to receive their initial certificates. The teacher evaluation program required local districts to notify the state board of any teacher who received an unsatisfactory rating in two consecutive evaluations. Failure to correct the deficiencies could bring about a revocation of certification.

1987

The 1987 legislative session brought a new governor, Bob Martinez, and a new commissioner of education, Betty Castor. Meanwhile, the career-ladder program was back knocking on the door. Thirty-nine of the state's 67 districts negotiated a career-ladder plan, which accounted for about 75% of the teachers in the state. However, Martinez questioned why the legislature supported a "bloated and inefficient bureaucracy" instead of directing funds to teachers and textbooks.

When the dust settled on the legislative session, the $90 million allocation for the one-year-old career-ladder program remained unfunded. Teacher unions were unhappy about the lack of support and unsuccessfully tried to pressure the governor into calling a special session.

Meanwhile, in a 5-to-2 decision, the state supreme court upheld the old merit-pay plan. That support might have helped the original program, but it arrived too late to be of any real assistance.

The lawmakers also decided that lottery funds, a program that was to start January 1, 1988, must be used by schools and colleges to augment but not supplement existing school spending. This was followed almost immediately by the governor's push and legislative enactment of a 5% sales tax on services, which later in the year was repealed in a special legislative session.

1988

Much of the education agenda Martinez presented to the 1988 legislature reflected the needs of the state's at-risk population. Major recommendations were for increases in preschool programs and more emphasis on opportunities for disadvantaged youngsters and migrant students. The governor also requested funds to expand school-based management and free the teachers from non-instructional duties.

By the time the session ended, the education system had received a 13% increase in funding geared to the governor's at-risk population programs, teacher salary increases, school facilities/transportation needs and increased emphasis on instructional technology to assist teacher productivity. Lawmakers still had many reservations about the career ladder and finally allowed it to die by not appropriating funds for the pilot plan.

Education reform efforts that continue to hold both state and national attention are restructuring efforts in the Miami-Dade schools and the unique involvement of the business community through the "Partners in Florida's Future" program and the Florida Compact, assuring post-high school employment to at-risk students. Reform efforts have been enriched by the amount of funds coming from the state lottery as well as reliance on locally raised funding for nearly 40% of the education budget.

ILLINOIS

1985

On July 18, 1985, Governor James R. Thompson signed into law a series of bills that put Illinois into the school reform business.

Two years earlier, the legislature had established the Illinois Commission on the Improvement of Elementary/Secondary Education. This group served as a vehicle for coalition building and generating ideas that resulted in the 1985 reform package.

While Illinois followed the first group of reform states by almost two years and some of the southern states by even longer, it was a significant step for a northern industrial state to take. The reform provisions and $400 million in extra education funding, was a delicately wrapped political package. Support came from taxpayer unions, school boards, teacher unions and the legislature.

Senate Bill 730 contained at least 36 major reform efforts grouped under a variety of governance, accountability, student and teacher headings. The scope of the reform package was unusually broad and, according to some observers, was one of the bolder steps taken by a northern state where teacher education forces, school boards and other education groups didn't always permit the fast-moving kinds of reforms seen in the southern states in the preceding years.

The Illinois reform law drew attention on a couple of fronts almost immediately, and as the fall of 1985 approached concerns at the school-district level started to bring about change. One of the key issues was

the governance section calling for school district reorganization studies. The law called for the 57 education service regions to appoint a committee to reorganize school districts by September 15th. Each committee was to develop a reorganization plan to assure that every school district would meet minimum standards unless a justifiable exception could be stated.

In addition, the law called for unit school districts (combined elementary and secondary districts) to have an enrollment of at least 1,500 pupils. The elementary districts were to have at least 1,000 pupils and separate high school districts at least 500. The committee plans were to be submitted to the state board of education for approval, and then to the voters in an April 1987 election. If approval were granted at all of these levels, the proposed reorganization changes were to be made by July 1, 1988.

By September 1985, opposition to these proposed reorganization steps was already growing. The state board heard testimony from school districts concerned about the enrollment mandate. While the law was primarily for planning, local school districts treated the provisions as mandates to be opposed.

The department of education, in the meantime, had released some test research to support the minimum enrollment numbers. This did not seem to mollify any of the school district opposition, however, and by December the Illinois Association of School Boards had voted to oppose future attempts by the legislature, the governor or the state board of education to require school districts to reorganize or consolidate.

1986

By January 1986, the governor had taken note of the growing opposition and vowed to block any attempts to push local school district consolidation without voter consent. While the law included this provision, local districts did not interpret it this way.

Ted Sanders, state superintendent of education, said he agreed with the governor and believed the governor's stand would help clarify the law. In February, the governor, in his state-of-the-state address, brought the issue up again and assured rural areas they would not be forced into consolidating school districts. This was one of the few education issues addressed. By June, opposition had grown even stronger, and the legislature repealed the controversial enrollment targets for consolidation and expanded the criteria that state study committees were to use into recommending reorganization of school districts.

Meanwhile, a second piece of the reform law had also gathered considerable attention. This was the mandated school district report card. This section of law called for each school district to submit to parents, taxpayers, the governor, the general assembly and the state board of education a report card assessing the performance of its schools and students. The report card was to serve as an index of school performance measured against statewide and local standards, provide comparative information from prior year comparisons and set future targets for school district and student achievement.

While the report card was scheduled for release in October, districts did have at least one school year to get ready for the program. Opposition was visible throughout the first school year, but the state board of education and legislative supporters successfully defended any move for change.

Throughout the first year of reform implementation, the state board approved more than 160 directives that supported pieces of the reform movement. In general, it tried to put special focus on early childhood education, student and school district accountability and curricular issues. While the media and sometimes

school district attention was on reorganization and report cards, the other reform measures changed the way school districts were able to conduct business and reinforced coalition building among taxpayers, school boards, teacher unions, the state legislature and the governor.

By the fall of 1986, fiscal projections were falling behind revenue needs and the governor sliced $55 million from the education budget for the next fiscal year. Funding for summer school programs for gifted and talented students was also eliminated.

1987

By 1987, legislative and gubernatorial support for reform was still holding strong. The governor recommended a 6% increase in state aid, while the state board asked for a higher level of funding. A deteriorating economy was hampering funding levels, but the content of reform seemed to be staying in place. Follow-up studies by the state board found that support for the district report card was increasing and that attitudes of local district superintendents had improved after the cards were released.

1988

Reform of the Chicago schools and the state's fiscal condition dominated the education picture in 1988. Although the governor asked the legislature to increase the state income tax to support education at the current level, the legislative appropriation for education reform programs was $27 million — slightly more than one-third of the amount requested. A package approved for reform of the Chicago schools had the potential of stripping authority from the existing management structure and placing more responsibility and authority with parents and local committees. The governor made several amendments to the measure and chided the legislature for not going far enough in the reforms or providing the needed funding. Without ultimate legislative approval of his changes, the deadlock assured that the topic will resurface in the 1989 sessions.

In an attempt to analyze the financial effect of mandates, Sanders created a Mandates Task Force to look at statutes, state board rulings and regulations. The task force report, approved by the board of education in May, found the mandates reasonable, serving a public good and having a definite purpose. In the board's view, eliminating any of the mandates was an unacceptable alternative to adequate funding, and it urged legislative reforms to this end. Composition of the group covered the entire education community as well as the governor's office and the legislature.

Progress was made in the area of teacher and administrator certification. The requirement for candidates to be tested prior to initial certification, approved in the 1985 legislation, became effective in July 1988. The state board took nearly three years to develop a certification testing system that established minimum passing scores in each of 53 skill areas. Additional state efforts are being directed at a cooperative effort between elementary/secondary and postsecondary education to increase minority achievement.

MASSACHUSETTS

1985

Compared to some of the other states that passed mega-reform legislation quickly in 1983 or 1984, Massachusetts took a long and slow route to reach enactment in 1985. In 1982, the House Education Committee had introduced a large reform package that saw approximately two years of committee work before it reached a dead end. The struggle that surrounded the reform package sometimes was based on budget problems; at other times, progress was held up by legislative reform. The reform package never made it through the legislature.

This set the stage for the major reform effort of 1985. Some of the top-down mandates and high-cost state-funded items in the 1984 legislation were replaced with incentives giving school districts more responsibility to raise money. Various observers had charged that original legislation would have cost more than the state could earmark and would have assigned 20% of the revenues from the state's 5% sales tax for the reform legislation.

Chapter 188 — The Massachusetts Public School Improvement Act — was a major reform act. A key element was the creation of state and local partnerships to carry out education reform. According to Nick Paleologos, chairman of the House Education Committee and one of the principal authors of the legislation, this law was not an attempt to change institutions so much as an attempt to institutionalize change.

Essentially, this legislation carried out education equity and excellence mandates through a series of formula grant and discretionary grant programs.

1986

During 1986, four grant programs were implemented under Chapter 188:

1. **School improvement grants** — The state earmarked $12.6 million annually for districts through this program. Acting as a foundation, the state awarded school districts $10 per pupil annually with actual spending levels set by the local district. Appropriations were made directly to individual schools where a committee composed of three teachers, two parents and the school principal (as well as a student in secondary schools) would determine how the incentive funds would be spent. The local school board retained the power of veto but was otherwise not involved. Basic skills remediation, dropout prevention and instructional improvement were some of the issues state legislators wanted local school districts to address.
2. **Equal educational opportunity grants** — By October 1986, grants totalling $25.1 million had been distributed with another $55.2 million earmarked for distribution by the end of the fiscal year. This program was targeted for districts spending less than 85% of the average per-pupil expenditure with annual funding limited to one-sixth of the total a district needed to raise its per-pupil expenditure to that level. In accepting the incentive funds, the district agreed to fund the remaining balance. The state anticipated making up an additional one-sixth in succeeding fiscal years until it reached its goal (a moving target).

3. **Professional development grants** — These grants, totalling $19.9 million to 385 districts during 1986, provided supplemental compensation for teachers, determined locally through collective bargaining. The state earmarked another $31.4 million to be awarded by June 1987.
4. **Horace Mann Grant Program** — Another innovative feature of this reform program, these grants allowed each district to select 6% of its teachers to receive up to $2,500 each per year. Individual teachers were compensated for taking on additional responsibilities or implementing their own curricular activities, the merits of which were determined through collective bargaining. Districts were not required to grant the maximum award, so local funds could be spread even further. During 1986, Horace Mann awards totaled $585,360 with another $7.3 million earmarked for distribution by mid-1987.

Four competitive discretionary grant programs also were fully implemented during 1986. Some 352 grants totaling $13 million were awarded to local districts in order to expand existing programs as well as plan and implement new ones. Another $9 million in state funds was earmarked for distribution by June 1987. Less affluent districts with demonstrated need for at-risk intervention, instructional materials and early childhood education programs were to get priority funding under this program.

- **Essential skills grants** — Some 49 dropout prevention grants, totaling $2.9 million, were made in 1986 to districts with documented high dropout rates over the past three years. Funding was restricted to programs serving students in grades 7 through 12.
- **Remediation** — An additional $8 million went to 95 remedial programs in districts with high concentrations of students failing basic skills assessments. These funds were to be used not only to provide any number of additional remedial and tutorial services, but also to hire additional teachers, teacher aides or guidance counselors.
- **Early childhood education grants** — About $4.5 million went to 128 districts to fund developmentally appropriate preschool efforts, enhanced kindergarten, day care, transitional kindergarten and extended day-care programs in 1986. An additional $5.7 million was marked for distribution by June 1987.
- **Instructional materials grants** — Some 80 districts received $894,304 in the first year to buy materials such as texts, workbooks, laboratory equipment, computer software, maps and video cassettes.

Also included in the law was a call for more frequent observation and evaluation of teachers, a state leadership academy to train principals and a clarification of the hearing process for incompetent or inefficient teachers and administrators.

In general, Chapter 188 struck a blow for local control. No provisions allowed for state intervention or local bypass if city government or school boards kept teachers, administrators and parents from using the incentive features of the law.

1987

Continuing in the spirit of local control, late in 1987 the Massachusetts state legislature and governor approved a second reform package, House Bill 6224, sometimes known as the Carnegie Schools Proposal. This reform grew out of reports issued by two special commissions, one on the conditions of teaching and the other on education achievement awards and school improvement concepts.

In part, HB 6224 fine-tuned some parts of Chapter 188 and also added new provisions for reform. Most noteworthy was the Carnegie school grant program. This portion of the law called for a comprehensive

three-year strategy, approved by the state board of education, to restructure schools. Governance and educational environments would be improved by empowering public school teachers and other professional staff members to help design the governance structure of the school. State regulations, local school policies or contractual provisions could be waived if school-based planning revealed such action was necessary to carry out the plan.

The planning team was to include the building principal, at least five teachers elected by their peers, two other professionals employed at the school, two parents of children who attended the school (chosen in elections held by the parent/teacher organization), one community representative and a high school student representative elected by the students.

It was charged with describing how the school governance structure would be changed and learning would be increased. In addition, the team would establish the goals of the school and describe the process it would follow in getting the new structure approved by the school board, teacher union and other organizations. An "impact statement" describing how the proposed restructured school would affect student learning and the lives of teachers and other professional staff members had to be a part of the planning grant and implementation proposals.

Other key provisions included the use of education achievement as well as expenditures as criteria for making funds available to schools defined as being "at risk" or "most at risk." This portion of the law would also cap the equal educational opportunity program at fiscal 1988 levels. Provisions also were made for a network of collaborative programs consisting of exemplary schools and public or private institutions of higher education.

School improvement councils had their funding level raised from $10 to $15 per student. The education achievement portion of the bill proposed cash grants to elementary and secondary schools or districts that demonstrated significant education improvement. The awards were intended to reward school staff and generate additional funds for school improvement councils.

HB 6224 also suggested raising voluntary minimum teacher salary levels to $20,000 and expand the Horace Mann grants to 10% of a school's teachers.

Most of the provisions for the Carnegie school portion of the law and others were in effect for the opening of the 1988–89 school year.

1988

A major issue was a large projected revenue shortfall. As a result, Governor Michael Dukakis was forced to cut the budgets across the board, including many of the funds designated for carrying out 1987 reform efforts. In making the cuts, the governor indicated his intent to restore the funds in January 1989, if the legislature adopted revenue-raising measures in the fall of 1988 or if revenues grew faster than anticipated. Included were funds to support the experimental Carnegie Schools. The parental choice in enrollment bill also was vetoed. While supporting the concept of parental choice, Dukakis felt the issue needed additional legislative study to address concerns about the measure's financial effect on districts. He directed the state department of education to come up with an alternate plan for allowing parental choice by January 1989.

MINNESOTA

1985

While other states were traveling the mega-reform legislative route to education reform, Minnesota's attempts to do the same were not at first productive. In January 1985, Governor Rudy Perpich submitted a proposal to the legislature entitled, "Access to Excellence." His eight-point plan contained many general ideas to improve teaching and learning, but, almost from the beginning, attention was centered on the student choice or open-enrollment plan. Educators dubbed it another voucher idea and vowed to have it killed before the session adjourned. The plan included these steps:

1. A move to have the state assume a greater share of the financial burden for schools by raising state aid from 60% to 80%
2. The establishment by the state department of education of a "learner outcomes" program for use by local school districts
3. The creation of a state evaluation/testing program that would follow the "learner outcomes" proposal
4. The development of model high schools for math and science
5. The reduction or elimination of some state requirements that might impede the open-enrollment plan
6. The appropriation of state money for local district staff development
7. The institution of a student-choice, open-enrollment plan for all students
8. The creation of a state management assistance plan to help local school districts implement the open-enrollment policy and the learner outcomes proposal and to help them make better use of state and local resources

After the plan was unveiled, Ruth Randall, state commissioner of education, appointed a 20-member task force representing school districts and education organizations to study the plan and make recommendations on how it could be implemented. This task force was asked, not to debate the merits of the plan, but rather to present ideas to be used in drafting legislation for the governor. By early March, legislation was to be introduced and ready for debate.

School officials in Minnesota, however, had many concerns. Some groups didn't just debate how to implement the ideas; they questioned some of the basic ideas themselves. The school districts wanted to know who would be transported in the open-enrollment plan and whether state money would pay to transport those students who wished to attend school a considerable distance away from the home district.

Another question concerned racial balance. Local officials wondered whether the new plan would upset racial balance, especially in the inner-city schools and the suburban school districts. Still another issue was whether local property tax funds could legally follow a student to another district.

Interscholastic athletics was another area of concern. Like many states, Minnesota operated under a voluntary organization that supervised rules and regulations in this area. The governing rules included a one-year residency requirement that prohibited students from moving to another school district and immediately becoming eligible to participate in athletics. Some educators feared the good football players would move to one school district, but others countered by saying that there would be no point because they wouldn't have another team to play.

Some school officials were also worried that the plan would create an entrepreneurial wave in the management of school districts because the plan would allow districts to choose whether or not they wanted to accept outside students.

In general, the governor's "Access to Excellence" ideas faced some strong opposition from the various education organizations. The open-enrollment plan was included in the education reform bill, and it moved through legislative committee before groups such as the state's Education Association, Federation of Teachers, the School Board Association and the Association of School Administrators brought it to a halt. Before the end of the 1985 legislative session, every reference to open enrollment was deleted from the bill.

At that point, open enrollment allowing 11th and 12th graders to attend college was included only in a house bill. However, late in the session, a conference committee took that provision out of the house bill and rolled it in with a senate bill that called for the creation of a special school for the arts. This bill received very little attention in hearings and was finally approved in a special session. Most of the education organizations had their eye on the big education bill and assumed that the idea of complete open enrollment, allowing all students in the state to have open access to all other districts, had died in the legislative session and that all was well.

As the summer wore on it became obvious that this little-known bill with a special school for the arts also allowed 11th and 12th graders to enroll in college classes, both public and private, and receive both high school and college credit. This was the postsecondary enrollment options law. The purpose was to promote "rigorous academic pursuits" and to provide options to high school students by encouraging them "to enroll full-time or part-time in non-sectarian courses or programs and eligible postsecondary institutions. . . ." Eligible institutions included public postsecondary institutions or private residential four-year liberal arts colleges located in Minnesota. Once a student had been accepted by an eligible institution, the college was to notify both the state commissioner of education and the school district within 10 days. The school district was then to grant academic credit for enrollment in a college course or program if no comparable course was offered by the school district.

There were two exceptions included in the act. One prevented students in intermediate districts from enrolling as postsecondary students in vocational education programs of other intermediate districts. Another exception stated that 11th and 12th graders could not carry a full load at the high school and enroll for additional college-level courses at the same time.

Perpich was elated over the turn of events and held the bill-signing ceremony at a community college. He said, "There is nothing to stop all school districts in Minnesota from offering more choice." He even challenged the school districts to offer a greater variety of cooperative programs.

At the postsecondary level, a new potential source of students was suddenly available. High schools on the other hand were faced with a possibility of losing students and funds. Money going to the school district would instead go to the colleges for the portion of the day or program the student attended. In this first summer, school officials reported that parents were confused, although some were elated at the prospect of getting two free years of college. Editorials in state newspapers were generally favorable, educators were generally skeptical, and the school year opened with more than 1,000 students enrolled in the program.

1986

Education groups talked openly of getting the bill repealed or submitting legislation that would change it significantly by January 1986. But those changes never really materialized. A conference committee report made some minor housekeeping changes in the original act, but the intent of the original legislation was upheld.

In 1986, two-year, private postsecondary institutions were made eligible to receive high school students. Another new provision called for counseling services to be provided for students and parents prior to enrolling in postsecondary institutions. This was brought on by the fact that if a student failed a college credit course, he or she also failed to receive high school credit. Enrollment dates were also clarified with students required to notify school districts of their intent to enroll in postsecondary courses by March 30 in order to give the school district time to make necessary plans.

The new changes also limited student participation in the program to no more than two academic years. In any courses that were open to regular college students and high school students, the postsecondary students had first chance. Dual credit also was clarified. Students could enroll either for secondary or postsecondary credit. The state would pay for secondary credits, and the student could obtain postsecondary credit with the same course at a later date. A student enrolled for secondary credit was not eligible for postsecondary financial aid, although transportation costs were included. The law also called for postsecondary institutions to develop a "uniform" policy for awarding credit for college courses.

By fall, some of the controversy had simmered down. Enrollment stayed approximately the same or increased slightly, and in school district circles people were saying that the idea was working and that school districts were voluntarily creating more choice programs across district lines that did not involve postsecondary enrollment.

1987

The 1987 legislative session saw the enactment of two other related bills. The first permitted young people between the ages of 12 and 21, who had not succeeded in school for a variety of reasons, to attend another public school district with state funds paying for their education. This program was called the High School Graduation Incentives Program.

A second law permitted two or more districts to set up an area learning center. Twenty grants were to be awarded for planning these institutions which would provide programs for secondary pupils and adults. The centers were to serve students who were chemically dependent, who were not likely to graduate from high school, who needed assistance in vocational and basic skills or could benefit from employment experiences and who needed assistance in transition from school to employment. Adults to be served included dislocated homemakers and workers and others who needed basic educational and social services. In addition to offering programs, the centers were charged with coordinating the use of other available educational services, social services and postsecondary institutions in the community.

1988

The High School Graduation Incentives Program was implemented in 1988. The intent was to motivate dropouts to re-enroll by offering educational options for those between the ages of 12 and 21. In its first year of operation, approximately 1,400 enrolled in the program, half of whom were former dropouts.

The original concept of Perpich's 1985 Access to Excellence moved closer to reality with the passage of legislation expanding the voluntary enrollment options into a program of required enrollment options for all districts by 1990–91. Also included in the new law was a provision to allow individuals over 21 years old to receive free education leading to their high school diploma.

The enrollment options law permitted districts to refuse students based on capacity of a program or class grade level of the building and restricted them from refusing students based on low academic achievement and handicaps.

Restrictions in the Adult High School Graduation Program required that the student have fewer than 14 years of education after the age of 5, have completed studies through the 10th grade, be eligible for unemployment compensation or have exhausted the benefit.

A new concept of the "choice" idea was presented by the governor in May. At that time, Perpich indicated to the state board of education his belief that education should be viewed as all one system — a system that blurs separation of the public and private sectors via cooperative efforts of the two. He did not support state funding of private institutions, however.

Like those in other states, the legislature ended the 1988 session by asking its auditor to study the equity of the school funding system. Forty-four school districts had charged that the system provided fewer opportunities to students in less affluent areas.

Also reflecting concerns in other states, the postsecondary community was working to improve the participation of minority students and increase the number of minority faculty members.

SOUTH CAROLINA

1984

Among education researchers and state officials who follow education reform, South Carolina's Education Improvement Act (EIA) is the state reform law most often cited in a comparative fashion. This comprehensive law was enacted in 1984 only after considerable cooperative effort on the part of the governor's office, the state department of education and the state legislature. Supported by a one-cent sales tax, the law emphasized increased student academic standards and accomplishments; changes in the teaching profession or strengthening training, evaluation and compensation; and a variety of accountability and efficiency measures.

A special feature of the act was the built-in mechanism for improvement and change. Leadership oversight and education department accountability provided for continuous review, assessment and flexibility in responding to changing education needs. A 12-member joint legislative oversight committee included the governor, the lieutenant governor, representatives of key legislative committees, the commission on higher education, state department of education, individual house and senate legislative members and two additional legislators. Among their responsibilities was advice on recommendations for implementation and funding. Any amendments to the EIA were normally channeled through this select oversight committee for approval before going to the house and senate education committees. The committee took an aggressive role in carrying out its responsibility to ensure legislative intent.

The EIA also provided for a joint business-education oversight subcommittee that delegated responsibility for reports, assessments and other findings related to the act. This committee could also recommend

modifications to the EIA act. Support and staff assistance for this committee were a part of the operational budget.

Another part of the accountability and oversight process was the division of public accountability within the state department of education. This was established on the recommendation of the joint oversight subcommittee and the steering committee of the business-education partnership. Responsible for planning, developing, reviewing and monitoring EIA programs, the division was required to provide information, reports and recommendations to the governor, state board, select committee and joint subcommittee. By law, the state board was required to provide an annual assessment of the EIA to the various oversight committees and the general assembly.

Other accountability measures under the EIA included the identification of critically impaired school districts, with state intervention possible if quality did not improve.

In the area of compensatory remedial programs, participating students were required to make a specified achievement gain on state tests in at least one of two consecutive years. If they did not, the program was to be evaluated before it could continue. The EIA also called for a state teacher evaluation system, requiring all school districts to evaluate all teachers.

A student exit exam was mandated for all high school students wishing to graduate with a diploma after 1990, in addition to completion of 20 units of course credit. Remedial instruction had to be provided for all students who failed any portion of the basic skill standards of the exit exam and students were to have four opportunities to pass the test. Students not meeting the state requirements would be issued a special state certificate in lieu of a diploma.

The EIA was divided into seven "subdivisions" and included the following major components.

- Subdivision A focused on raising student performance by increasing academic standards. It included sections on high school graduation standards, strengthening of student discipline and attendance and more effective use of classroom learning through the length of the school day and year.
- Subdivision B dealt with strengthening the teaching and testing of the basic skills leading toward the high school exit test. Policies pertained to grade-to-grade promotion, basic-skill testing in all grades, alcohol and drug-abuse prevention programs and a minimum pupil-teacher ratio in some language, arts and mathematics courses.
- Subdivision C aimed at elevating the teaching profession by strengthening teacher training, evaluation and compensation. This included loan forgiveness and higher teacher salaries to hold qualified teachers in the profession, improving parent/teacher training programs and lengthening the school year for all teachers.
- Subdivision D focused on improving leadership, management and fiscal efficiency of the schools at all levels. Sections dealt with principals and administrators, training and evaluation of prospective and current school administrators.
- Subdivision E addressed quality control in school districts. Included were incentive, instruction improvement and monitoring programs and authorization for the state superintendent to take over impaired school districts.
- Subdivision F emphasized the creation of more effective partnerships among the schools, parents, community and business.
- Subdivision G called for school facilities conducive to improved student learning. This section also dealt with repairs, renovations and construction of school buildings, and funding of the EIA through a 1% increase in sales tax.

As approved by the general assembly in June of 1984, the act provided $265,860 for implementation. About $19 million went to increasing academic standards. Approximately $64 million were spent on basic skills programs including about $60.5 million for compensatory and remedial instruction. The teaching profession provisions were funded at $74.9 million with $60 million of this amount going to raise the average state teachers' salary closer to the southeastern average. Programs pertaining to administrative leadership and management were funded at $3 million. Quality control programs, including incentive grants for school improvement, innovative program grants, school improvement councils and annual school improvement reports, were funded at $455,000. The school building aid program received $55.7 million. Other supportive activities to implement the act were funded at $530,000.

1985

For the 1984–85 school year, the first year of the EIA, student academic, discipline and attendance standards were implemented, having an almost immediate impact on student attendance. Approximately 8,290 more students were in school in the 1984–85 school year than the previous year, an increase of 1.6%. The attendance standards did present some problems with family courts, however. School administrators claimed the judges were not helping enforce the truancy law. One judge in the Richland County family court heard more than 700 truancy cases during the summer of 1984 and sentenced the parents to jail for not taking steps to assure that their children were in school.

Meanwhile, the state board of education identified six seriously impaired school districts and took steps to improve the quality of education in those districts. It also adopted three model teacher incentive programs for evaluation and pilot testing during the following school year. These dealt with individual compensation, bonuses and career ladders.

1986

In the fall of 1986, weak economic projections forced Governor Richard W. Riley to take steps to stave off a $10 million shortfall. The cuts fell heavily in the department of education with $1.5 million cut out of that budget and other large cuts made in school construction funds. Riley left intact programs initiated in the previous year under the EIA. The legislature, however, delayed the timetable for decreasing teacher-student ratios in secondary school English classes, a provision later vetoed by the governor because the legislature had not allocated funds. Spending on K–12 education was still 3.6% higher than the previous year, partly because of the one-cent sales tax for the EIA.

It was reported in the second year that the state led others on student SAT score gains and that student truancy was substantially reduced. The governor also cited positive parent reaction and school district productivity.

1987

New Governor Carroll A. Campbell Jr. called education an essential component of economic development and said he would push to bring the average teacher salary up to the southeastern states' average. Under

the new governor's leadership, funds for the EIA moved from $240 million from the previous year to $255 million with lawmakers giving teachers a pay raise of slightly more than 6%. The new budget also included $200,000 to study the need for a residential high school for gifted math and science students. In the fall, the department of education reported that 75.2% of all students enrolled in the 1st grade in 1987 met the state's minimum standards on their readiness test, compared to only 60% in 1979.

Although Riley had left office, his influence was carried on by his executive assistant for education, Terry Peterson, who continued his involvement as executive director of one of the blue-ribbon committees charged with monitoring the reforms. Peterson served as Riley's education assistant for eight years.

1988

In 1988, the state continued to increase its budget for education and work on teacher profession areas. The total education appropriation increased by 8%. Teacher salaries, increased in 1987 by more than 6%, rose an average of 2.5% in 1988. In the years since the 1984 EIA passage, the operating budget for education had increased 50% and the average salary of the teachers had increased by around $4,500 per year. The incentive program pilot tests were being conducted in 45 districts and the model principal incentive plans piloted in 24.

The state department of education also was pilot testing a new outcomes-based school accreditation system and had completed a comprehensive review of the effects of reform efforts since 1984. Fourteen priority areas augmented the original efforts to continue moving the state forward in reform implementation. Salaries and opportunities for the education profession have improved, dropout rates have improved, test scores have improved, morale has improved. New efforts by the governor moved much of the effort another step into addressing the literacy rate of the state's adults through an Initiative for Work Force Excellence. The legislature also appropriated funds for a math/science high school.

TENNESSEE

1983

"No teacher in Tennessee's public school system is paid a penny more for excellence in performance." With this famous quote, Governor Lamar Alexander began hammering away in 1983 for a career-ladder program to pay teachers on a merit basis. Calling it the "Tennessee Better Schools Program," he lobbied the business and education community throughout the state on the need to reward teachers for doing a good job and the need to associate good schools with more jobs for Tennessee citizens. His combined state economic drive and education reform drive netted a new General Motors automobile assembly plant and the country's first statewide, funded career-ladder program for teachers.

The governor's education reform proposal was not successful in the 1983 legislative session. Following adjournment, a large interim study effort was organized and the governor, with key legislative leadership,

went to work on building legislative support for the next session. Everyone expected the career ladder to be a top issue of the 1984 session, but just before Christmas of 1983, the governor called a special session starting on the same day as the regular session. He reasoned that this would force the legislature to deal with his Better Schools Program first. This also signaled a no-holds-barred session because the teachers' association had been planning alternative career ladder legislation to be offered in the regular session. The sudden turn of events forced the teachers into reacting rather than taking the offense.

1984

By late February, a new career-ladder and incentive-pay supplement program for teachers was enacted and funded. The Comprehensive Education Reform Act of 1984, SB 1, earmarked more than $401 million in new revenues for kindergarten through higher education during 1984-85, and more than $1 billion for the following three years. The primary goal was to produce better schools by focusing on the abilities and resources of the classroom teachers. The heart of the reform package gave Tennessee the first comprehensive career incentive pay system for teachers in America and was designed to attract and keep outstanding teachers in the classroom. Tennessee's best and most experienced teachers were given the opportunity to earn almost $10,000 a year more than they could earn at that time.

Key features were:

- A five-step career ladder — from the entry-level probationary teacher to the Career Level III teacher on top — with pay supplements geared to the top three steps ranging from $1,000 to $7,000 over the teacher's regular pay.
- Advancement on the career ladder tied to more rigorous evaluations at both the state and local district level.
- A greater role for local school leaders in the evaluation of teachers.
- Introduction of a "probationary" entry year for new teachers prior to granting regular state certification, thus giving local school authorities four rather than three years to evaluate new teachers before granting tenure.
- Tougher standards for teacher training.
- Special entry-pay supplements for apprentice-level teachers to provide additional incentives for young men and women to become teachers.
- A program to provide teacher aides in the lower grades at a cost of $67.5 million in 1984-85.

The general assembly also approved a 10% across-the-board pay increase for teachers, in addition to the new pay supplements under the $50 million career-incentive program.

A comparable career ladder and incentive pay supplement program was provided for principals, assistant principals and supervisors. Further, the act extended the school year in Tennessee by five additional days for classroom instruction, and it created a special tuition loan program for college students planning careers as math or science teachers.

The new Tennessee initiatives also included:

- A restructured state board of education to provide clearer lay governance for public education.
- $9 million for a "Computer Skills Next" program to purchase computers for local schools and help students learn to use them before high school.
- $1.25 million for 1st grade readiness, making kindergarten programs available to all preschoolers.
- $3.5 million for more math and science teachers.

- A total of $1.4 million in new funding for gifted student programs, music and art in the early grades, and more math and science laboratory equipment
- $8.5 million for new equipment for the vocational education program
- $1.25 million for alternative schools to promote classroom discipline
- $1.2 million for textbooks
- $4.6 million for instructional supplies
- $2.2 million for transportation
- $1.1 million for basic maintenance and operation expenses
- $2 million for books for regional libraries
- $10 million for university Centers of Excellence

To pay for the new initiatives in education, Alexander supported, and the general assembly adopted, a one-cent increase in the states sales tax, which was applied to most amusements and certain other business taxes.

1985

With support from the Tennessee Education Association, the career-ladder program was kicked off to a fast start with statewide evaluators trained and the department of education quickly moving to inform all teachers of the new program. Within one year, more than 90% of the eligible tenured teachers had applied for career-ladder status, giving them a $1,000 annual pay boost in addition to across-the-board increases. By mid-year, the state board of education had approved more than 35,000 teachers for the career ladder; 31,077 were placed on level one, 458 on level two and 632 on level three. Nearly 40% of the teachers and administrators who had been evaluated and had applied for levels two and three of the career ladder were moved to those levels. Another 600 candidates narrowly missed qualifying for levels two and three because scores were down in one area of competency. The state board approved an "accelerated career development program," allowing these teachers to have another chance at the program and to receive their upper-level award by late in 1985.

Implementation of the career-ladder program stretched the communication skills of the department of education and many school districts. By late 1985, the state commissioner of education said the goal for the next year would be to improve the career-ladder orientation manual, reduce the confidentiality of the system in some areas, streamline the contents required in a teacher's portfolio (a document showing lesson plans and professional development activities), simplify the scoring/evaluation process and prepare additional workshops for the statewide evaluators. Some concern was expressed over the amount of money being spent on the implementation process rather than getting into the paychecks of teachers. While the implementation process was costly, it was also a first-time endeavor. No other state could be used as a model.

1986

As the career ladder entered its third year of operation, it was estimated that more than 8,000 teachers were at or moving toward levels two and three. In the first year, 1,700 teachers were placed on level two or three; in the second year, 2,500 educators were placed in the upper rungs; and in the spring of 1986,

more than 3,000 additional teachers had applied to be evaluated. During the first two years of the program, the evaluation cycle for teachers took a full year to complete. During the third year, plans were under way to change that to a one-semester process. During the 1986 legislative session, $11.76 million of new money was earmarked for the career-ladder program, bringing the total fiscal 1987 budget for the career ladder to more than $92 million. The legislature also brought the administrator career ladder more closely in line with the teacher career ladder and established rules to make administrators and teachers who were involved in the evaluation process immune from personal or official liability.

1987

This year brought a new governor, Ned McWherter, and a new state commissioner, Charles E. Smith. Also coming along with the new regime was a budget shortfall. Career-ladder and education funding dipped somewhat, with the governor recommending a 4% salary increase and $89.6 million in new funds for the state career ladder. The session ended, however, with the Better Schools Program funded at the previous year's level. This amounted to $89.6 million earmarked for the state career-ladder system, $3 million less than in fiscal year 1987.

1988

The opening of the 1988 legislative session saw more discussion about changes needed in the career-ladder program. Smith asked the state legislature to remove the "extended contract" allocation from the career-ladder bonus plan. His contention was that the wealthier districts tended to have higher percentages of level two and three teachers, meaning the extended contract money was benefiting the wealthier districts more than the poorer districts. He was also concerned that benefits in the career-ladder program were too often being driven by teacher and school needs rather than student needs. Smith was attempting to design a plan that would target student needs and improve the quality of education being offered in the school districts. The legislature responded by separating the "extended contract" allocations from the program and opening the possibility of extended contracts to more than the career-ladder teachers. It also increased the teacher's base starting pay by more than $1,500.

Additional activity by the commissioner of education centered on carrying out the provisions in the reform act through a review and restructuring of the state's education structure. After taking office in 1987, Smith revamped the state department of education in three separate state reductions. Based on a comprehensive 16-month internal review, the effort resulted in the merger of offices performing like tasks, the elimination of district field offices and a projected salary savings to the state of $2.4 million per year.

The state's education reform efforts may be affected by a pending lawsuit. Some school districts have charged that the finance system used for the schools discriminates against the poorer districts. Adding a new twist is the challenge of a related law that requires half of all locally-collected sales tax revenues to be devoted to the schools.

TEXAS

1984

June 23, 1984, marked the end of a special legislative session called by Governor Mark White to deal with education reform. In this session, the legislature approved a major tax increase and a large education reform bill — 226-page HB 72. This was viewed as one of the largest and most sweeping education overhauls in the state's 150-year history. White often remarked in his year-long push for the law that the future of Texas would have to be built on the educated mind and not on oil and gas as in the past.

Neither the governor nor the legislature realized how soon this struggle was to begin. The budget that was built for education reform soon was reeling from falling oil prices. The budget that was balanced on $24-a-barrel oil soon was supported by $18- to $15-a-barrel oil, and the state was trying not only to implement an education reform package but also to balance the state budget.

HB 72, the omnibus reform bill, covered a wide range of reforms. For teachers and administrators, it included:

- A four-step career ladder with a strong teacher evaluation component
- A management training program for superintendents and principals
- An alternative certification route
- A lowered class-size program
- Competency testing of existing teachers

For students, it included:

- A ban on social promotion requiring a grade average of 70% for passing from one grade to the next
- A minimum competency test in the basic skills for high school graduation
- A limit on extracurricular participation for students who failed to pass all courses

For school board members:

- A mandated training program for local board members
- A change for the state board from an elected to an appointed status

Texas was one of the few states to change the governance structure of the state education department at the same time it mandated broad reforms in the schools. Adding to the implementation problems was the speed with which school districts had to implement the student academic programs, especially the no-pass-no-play rule, which kept students out of sports and extracurricular activities for six weeks if they failed any course.

The extracurricular activities participation sanctions were to go into effect at mid-year following enactment. Many school districts, however, moved implementation up to the fall in time for the football season in order to raise as much publicity about the law as possible. The law was not popular with football coaches or parents. As it was phased in during the school year, teachers complained about paperwork, and some students complained that they didn't have time to change their class schedule because they did not know they would have to pass all classes to participate. The Texas coaches' association lobbied for changes in the law, but in the end only some rules and regulations were cleaned up and the original intent of the no-pass/no-play law stayed in effect.

Teachers, on the other hand, began to register their concern over the requirement calling for competency testing of current teachers. The state teachers' association filed a lawsuit to block the use of the test. A great deal of concern was expressed over who would have to take various portions of the general and the subject-area tests. At one point, it was suggested that school administrators be required to pass a test in the area of their initial teacher certification. Others advocated that if an administrator was to evaluate teachers he or she should be competent enough to pass *all* subject-area tests.

1985

In the first year following enactment, the legislature made few changes in the reform law and even protected elementary and secondary education from budget cuts while other state agencies were hit much harder. A new bill gave teachers a 30-minute lunch period away from students. Money was appropriated for a basic-skills, initial teacher-certification test to be required beginning in the spring of 1986.

The legislature was called back for a special session in late May. Education groups were asking for more money to increase the number of people eligible for the career-ladder program, a limit on paperwork and a change in the student suspension and expulsion procedures. The governor did not add these items to the agenda, but the legislature did pass a resolution calling on the state board to find ways to reduce the teachers' paper load.

1986

The budget crisis, alive in 1985, moved into 1986 with an even bigger impact. The governor called a special session in late fall to increase taxes and to cut back on spending. Elementary and secondary education and the reform law in general escaped with few cuts. A temporary tax increase to balance the budget was the most controversial issue, and it eventually passed after long debate. Meanwhile, the Texas State Teachers' Association withdrew two separate actions filed in federal district court to block the dismissal of teachers who had failed the required literacy test. The original suit said that because a large number of minority teachers had failed the test, it was therefore discriminatory; however, in the end, most of the people named in the class-action suit passed the test.

1987

The no-pass/no-play rule was back for more legislative consideration, but in June the Texas senate refused to reduce the penalty for students who failed one course. It did allow the state board to run a pilot program to allow a few selected schools to experiment with a three-week ban from extracurricular activities.

The legislature also repealed the subject-area tests for current teachers, an issue that had been controversial since 1984. The budget crisis lingered throughout the spring and early summer and finally, three weeks into the new fiscal year, the legislature agreed to a $5.7 billion tax increase, the largest in the state's history. Most of the education reform programs remained at prior-year budget levels, and except for one or two areas, the reforms stayed intact, although they did feel the impact of declining oil prices.

1988

Activity in 1988 has centered on a gubernatorial Select Committee on Education, impaneled in January to look at the ways local districts are structured and managed, how students perform on tests and to analyze the consequences of a 1987 court ruling that declared the school finance system unconstitutional. The governor asked the group to have its recommendations to him by January 1989, in time for the next legislative session. In the meantime, the court ruling has been appealed by the state, and the governor has refused to call a special session to deal with the issue of school finance.

Another governor's task force issued its final recommendations early in 1988. The Task Force on Vocational Education stressed the importance of improving the vocational education offerings in an effort to reduce the dropout rate and aid the state. It also stressed the need to upgrade the programs, to emphasize academic inputs, to eliminate duplicate programs and to ensure a smooth transition between different levels of education.

One issue that reached closure in 1988 was the replacement, by the state board of education, of the teacher Preprofessional Skills Test which was facing legal tests for equity. The board also gave first approval to the new academic skills program of student assessment required by the 1987 legislature. The new student tests were to receive final board approval in October 1988.

The federal Equal Educational Opportunity Commission ruled in September that the teacher literacy test used in 1986 was discriminatory to both blacks and those over 40 years of age. The 1,875 teachers denied approval in 1986 became eligible for reinstatement and back pay.

WASHINGTON

Education reform did not start in all states in 1983 and 1984. Francis Keppel of Harvard University maintains that education reform was under way in many states prior to 1983. While *A Nation At Risk* did, in fact, give the country a mythical starting date, Washington is a good example where reform was brought on by surrounding school finance litigation and accountability issues prior to 1983.

Concern over rising property tax rates and a school finance court case forced the legislature to redefine "basic education" for the funding formula. This involved naming subject areas and the amount of time schools would provide for instruction in the basic subject areas at all grade levels. The state was to fund the basic education portion of the school program, and local districts could approve funds for other add-on programs.

This finance law change set in motion a statewide emphasis on the basic skills and put the legislature on a constant search for new tax money during the following legislative sessions. As the education reform movement came into focus in 1983, this prior activity negated any new reform push. Interest in reform was evident, but new coalitions had to be built before any action could be taken. Because of the finance legislative activity of the mid-1970s, budget sessions were always of key importance and off-year interim sessions usually produced few big changes.

1984

In the 1984 legislative session, a package of reform bills was introduced. No strong coalitions were built to support this collection of bills and the opposition undercut the reform package one bill at a time. Eventually, the legislature did approve sub-HB 1246.

Included in this reform bill was a call for school districts to establish an annual process of goal-setting involving citizen, education, community and business leaders. Setting goals was to take into account a school district's resources and assure that "both economies in management and operation and quality in education are assured." Learning objectives were to be measured by assessing student achievement. The whole process was to be reviewed at least once every two years. To help set goals in this process, the superintendent of public instruction was, with the state board of education, to prepare model curriculum programs and curriculum guidelines in three subject areas each year. Each model was to span all grades and include statements of expected learning outcomes, content integration with other subject areas and recommended instruction strategies.

Beginning July 1, 1985, all 9th-grade students were expected to meet new high school graduation requirements that included: three years of English, two years of mathematics, two-and-one-half years of social studies, two years of science and one year of occupational education. School districts were also to develop a test for 2nd graders. The state was to develop reading, mathematics and language arts tests for grades 4 and 8, and a state sample test was to be given in the 11th grade every two years. The state department of education was also to work on a life-skills test.

"Highly capable students" were to get special instruction in programs that districts could operate either separately or jointly. Another provision of the law waived tuition at state colleges and universities and some fees for two years for all high school students who received the Washington Scholars Award and maintained 3.5 grade averages.

1985

With the 1984 interim session out of the way, all eyes were focused on the 1985 legislative session. Part of the anticipation was fueled by the work of at least three different groups, all making key recommendations on education reform. The most comprehensive study was made by the Washington Temporary Committee on Education Policy, Structure and Management, a legislative group appointed in April 1982 by Governor John Spellman.

Also at work was the Washington Business Roundtable, a group of 32 chief executive officers of the state's largest corporations. This group was organized in 1983. Its work focused on a few issues and called for $150 million investment in school improvement for the next two years. The third group was the Citizens Education Center of the Northwest, a five-year-old grassroots organization that made reform recommendations to the legislature in late 1984. This group attempted to add the citizens' voice to the other recommendations. The groups all promised strong working relationships with state education groups.

The recommendations of the Temporary Committee on Education Policy, Structure and Management made the most sweeping recommendations with at least 130 or more proposals for the state's public schools.

Included were higher graduation requirements, stronger testing programs for students at the high-school level and for teachers prior to certification, the reduction of teacher/student ratios in kindergarten through 3rd grade, preschool programs for the disadvantaged, a career-ladder system, greater involvement of business and community groups with parents in the local schools, and the introduction of foreign languages.

The committee did not put dollar amounts on all the recommendations, but at the final hearings an estimate of $300 million a year was mentioned. Business Roundtable recommendations carried a price tag of about $150 million over a two-year period. It recommended a comprehensive preschool program similar to the federal Head Start program and improvement of training and preparation of teachers and school administrators. The latter included using state funds to bring all teachers up to certification standards in the subjects they were teaching and initiating an elaborate career-ladder program.

The citizens' group came in with 35 recommendations for K–12 education, including redesigning the teacher evaluation system and making it a part of the career-ladder program, a school-based management program giving parents more participatory power at the local level and a strengthened early childhood education program.

Another important ingredient leading up to the 1985 legislative session was the election of a new governor, Booth Gardner. Everyone, including Gardner, seemed to agree that this was to be the education reform year. The largest unanswered question, however, was how to finance it. Spellman had proposed $4.3 billion for elementary/secondary education in the 1985–86 fiscal year and a $191 million tax cut. The fiscal issue took a great deal of the new governor's attention while he repeatedly called for a balanced tax structure, including the enactment of some form of income tax. Washington, a state with no income tax, attempted to provide 90% of the school funding from the state level.

Many of the reform recommendations made by the three groups took a back seat to tax/fiscal issues. Recommendations to increase sales, business and occupation taxes became hard to move in the legislature and, as a result, the big reform hopes for 1985 never materialized.

1986

In 1986, the Washington State Board of Education, following a two-year effort, moved to raise education standards and promote the subject-matter proficiency testing of the state's teachers.

1987

The year opened with Gardner pledging to make education his top legislative priority. He presented a school-reform plan with a pricetag of $522 million that carried a statewide minimum salary for teachers, lower pupil/teacher ratios in the early grades and an increase in the state limit on school districts' ability to rely on local property taxes. All of this was to be financed with a new tax on services and the lowering of the sales tax rate by one-half percent.

Most noteworthy in this session was the approval of ESSB 5479 with a subsection entitled "Schools for the Future: Schools for the Twenty-first Century." This pilot program was to award up to $2 million to 20 schools or districts to determine whether increasing local decision-making authority could produce increased learning.

1988

Initial applications for the 21st-Century schools were to have been submitted by March 1988, but that deadline was subsequently extended to later in the school year. The pilot projects were started with initial two-year grants with the districts being selected by the governor and state board of education in the summer. The recipients represented a balance of geographic and school characteristics and started their work in September 1988.

The law called for state statutes and administrative rules and local policies relating to the length of the school year, teacher contract hours, student/teacher ratios, salary lids, the commingling of categorical funds and other administrative matters to be waived if the local district planning committee agreed. Applications included assurances from the teachers, principals, school boards and superintendents that all parties had cooperated in developing the projects and that bargaining contracts had been modified to accommodate the new organizational structures.

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